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ABSTRACT

Jose de Escandon's colonization work in the present Mexican state of Tamaulipas and the lower Rio Grande valley forms an essential part of the Spanish northern borderlands. Many of the land grants in the area, ranching, and some of the present day agricultural industries originated with the colonization projects initiated by Escandon, who proved himself a capable military leader, administrator, and business person by suppressing several Indian uprisings, by overseeing the missions in his district of Queretaro, and by his prosperous commercial ventures. These achievements led to his appointment in 1746 to head the pacification and settlement of the Seno Mexicano. In 1748 Escandon was chosen governor of Nuevo Santander. As governor Escandon established several settlements in the Seno Mexicano, thus securing the area against foreign threats. This booklet briefly reviews Jose de Escandon's life and accomplishments. Topics covered include: the Northern Spanish frontier, Indians in the Seno Mexicano, early entradas into Seno Mexicano, Escandon's early career, plans for the conquest of the Seno Mexicano, Escandon's appointment as colonizer, Escandon's entrada into the Seno Mexicano, settlement of Nuevo Santander, Jose Tienda de Cuervo Report, general visit of the 1767 Royal Commission, and the end of Escandon's governorship. An 18-item bibliography concludes the booklet. (NQA)

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JOSE DE ESCANDON

COLONIZER OF NUEVO SANTANDER

by

HUBERT J. MILLER

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To the descendents of the *fundadores*
of the Rio Grande settlements

THE ESCANDON COAT OF ARMS

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JOSE DE ESCANDON, THE FATHER OF TAMAULIPAS AND THE LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY

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GLOSSARY

Alcalde - Town mayor; also a governor over a district. Performed both administrative and judicial functions.

Alcalde mayor - Governor of a province, similar to *corregidor* or governor.

Audiencia - Highest court in the kingdom of New Spain (Mexico); also took on certain administrative functions.

Caballería - Unit of measure consisting of one hundred twenty-five acres.

Cacique - Indian Chief.

Cédula - Royal decree.

Congrega - Forced labor device which obligated a a citizen to Christianize and protect the Indians as well as the right to collect tribute and demand Indian services.

Conquistador - Conqueror.

Corregidor - Royal official appointed to govern a province, which usually was highly populated with Indians.

Ejido - Land reserved for communal use by the people of a town.

Entrada - Initial exploratory entrance into an unknown territory.

Fiscal - Attorney.

Fray - A title for a member of a religious order such as the Franciscans.

Hacienda - Estate or large ranch in Mexico.

Junta - Meeting, council or board of advisers or directors.

Justicia - Law-court.

Lugar - Place of settlement not meriting villa status.

Mayordomo - Foreman or manager of an hacienda.

Mestizo - Offspring from the union of an Indian and a Spaniard.

Población - Settlement, village or town.

Porción - Grant of land in the shape of a prolonged quadrangle with approximately nine-thirteenths of a mile of river front and length extending back from the river from eleven to sixteen miles. It was a traditional practice for the king to give land to his subjects as a reward for services to the crown or to encourage settlements in unoccupied areas. Frequently such land grants carried tax-exemptions during the initial years of settlement.

Presidio - Army fort on the frontier.

Vara - Unit of measure consisting of thirty-three and one-half inches.

Villa - Village or town.

Visitador - Inspector.

PREFACE

Frederick Jackson Turner and Francis Parkman wrote about the English and French frontier respectively. It was not until the arrival of Herbert Eugene Bolton, a student of Turner, during the early part of the present century that the Spanish frontier in the United States received its due recognition. Rightly did Bolton insist that frontier histories in the United States can never be complete if historians fail to treat the Hispanic frontier moving north from Mexico and the Caribbean Islands into the present day continental United States. To this mission Bolton and the legion of students, whom he directly and indirectly influenced, devoted themselves both in their research and teaching.

It is not surprising then to find one of Bolton's students, Lawrence Francis Hill, select the colonization work of José de Escandón as an area for research. His book published in 1926 was not the first treatise on the work of this man. A small number of Mexican historians writing on the history of Tamaulipas did not overlook the colonization work of Escandón. Needless to add, it is a most significant chapter in the Hispanic borderland story, especially for the inhabitants of the lower Rio Grande Valley. Any person who desires to begin the story of land grants, irrigation, agriculture and ranching on the Rio Grande below Laredo must begin the story with the colonizer of the province of Nuevo Santander, which later became the state of Tamaulipas and until 1848 extended northward to the Nueces river in Texas. Hopefully the booklet will make the telling of the story easier.

The short bibliography at the end of the booklet can provide the reader with additional information where greater detail is desired. Unfortunately Escandón has no biographer. His lifework, as the titles in the bibliography indicate, is related in terms of the history of Tamaulipas or the history of the lower Rio Grande Valley. The works of Carlos Castañeda, Lawrence Francis Hill and Florence Johnson Scott provide much detail on the original Rio Grande settlements. The reader who wishes more details on the first families in these settlements must begin with the work of Mrs. Scott.

For persons knowledgeable in reading Spanish, much information on the original colonizers can be obtained from the sources treating the history of the state of Tamaulipas. A valuable documentary source is the two volume *Estado general de las fundaciones hechas por D. José de Escandón en la colonia del Nuevo Santander, costa del Seno Mexicano*. Most of the work is devoted to the Cuervo Report of 1757, which paints a most detailed picture of the status of the province at that date. The second volume includes the history of the area written by Padre Vicente Santa María, an eyewitness account. Unfortunately the padre's account is incomplete since it treated only the history of the region up until the time of the 1740's when Escandón entered the colonization scene. The second volume, which described the colonization venture, has not been found.

The author is greatly indebted to the Pan American University Research Council for a grant that made the research for the booklet possible. Equal recognition belongs to the Pan American Bicentennial Committee, which provided financial resources for typing and illustrating the copy. The project hopefully in some measure will contribute to the university's stated goal of being an institution for the meeting of two cultures.

Appreciation is due to Dr. Gilbert Cruz and Manuel López, colleagues of mine; and Al Ramírez, proprietor of the New Santander Press, whose proofreading and suggestions were most helpful in preparing the manuscript for the press. Special thanks are extended to Alonzo Hector Alvarez, whose research on the Indians living along the Rio Grande between Mier and Reynosa proved most helpful. Last but not least special gratitude is in order for Doris, whose proofreading and typing lightened the burdens of publication. For the defects that remain, the author assumes full responsibility.

Pan American University
March 1980

Hubert J. Miller

Adapted from John Francis Bannon, *The Spanish Borderlands Frontier 1513-1821*, 4

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INTRODUCTION

The Hispanic legacy within the present day continental boundaries of the United States is evident to the traveler who journeys within the area known as the Spanish borderlands. These lands constituted the Spanish northern frontier for three centuries, 1519-1821, and extended from Florida to California. Spanish place names, architecture, missions and presidios are only some of the silent reminders of Spain's presence. Less obvious to the uninformed traveler are the industries which date their origin to the arrival of the Spanish frontier, such as ranching, mining and agriculture.

The average American school child, whose attention is focused on the westward moving Anglo frontier, is reminded too infrequently of the northward moving Spanish frontier from the Caribbean and Mexico. The latter was in the process of penetrating the Santa Fe, New Mexico, area when the English settlers established their first permanent colony at Jamestown, Virginia, in 1607. A superficial knowledge of missions and presidios and the names of a few Spanish explorers associated with the Hispanic frontier frequently constitute the sum total of the understanding of the Hispanic legacy in the United States. The result is a focus on Anglo frontiersmen and pioneers, forgetting the existence of an earlier Spanish frontier. The failure to recognize this all important facet of history is not only an historical injustice but also ar injustice to the history of the Mexican American people, who rightly claim this frontier as an integral part of their historical past.

The story of José de Escandón and his colonization work in the present day Mexican state of Tamaulipas and the lower Rio Grande valley forms an essential part of the Spanish northern borderlands. The work of the man carries a special significance for the south Texas area between the Rio Grande and Nueces rivers. Many of the land grants in this area originated with the colonization projects initiated by Escandón. Furthermore ranching and some of the present day agricultural industries are the heirs of this venture. To understand the work of the men in opening up new lands in northeastern Mexico and the lower Rio Grande valley, the reader must first see the overall picture of the northern frontier movement of New Spain.

NORTHERN SPANISH FRONTIER

The Spanish frontier in the present day Mexico began in 1519 with the founding of Veracruz by Hernán Cortés. With the fall of the Aztec capital, Tenochtitlán, in 1521, Cortés and his men expanded the frontier line in all directions. The year following the fall of the Aztec capital the first governor of Mexico extended the frontier line on the Caribbean coast from Veracruz to the Pánuco River at the present day site of Tampico.

On the western coast of Mexico, Cortés and his arch-rival, Nuño de Guzmán, pushed the line northward. The former crossed the Gulf of California and landed on the lower California peninsula, which he took for an island. The latter pushed northward and founded Culiacán in 1536. The work of Cortés and Nuño de Guzmán prepared the way for Francisco Vásquez de Coronado's expedition to the north from 1540 to 1542.

As the western coast frontier gradually and relentlessly moved northward, a similar phenomenon was taking place in the central plateau between the eastern and western Sierra Madre mountain ranges. By the end of the sixteenth century the line on the central plateau was approaching the Rio Grande. Geographic obstacles, Indians, who opposed the Spanish invaders of their territories, and the limited prospects for wealth delayed settlement of the Texas area. The French advance down the Mississippi River in the late seventeenth century changed the picture drastically. French occupation of the mouth of the Mississippi River became a reality around the turn of the century. French colonial expansion immediately prompted Spanish officials to establish missions and presidios in east Texas in 1716. Two years later the mission of San Antonio de Valero, more commonly known as the Alamo, was founded. The Franciscan missionaries who had been desirous of doing missionary work among the Texas Indians now had their opportunity. It was a typical frontier experience in which conversion of the Indians and defense against Indians and rival European powers proved mutually beneficial to both Church and state.

The northward moving frontier to Texas advanced along the western slope of the Sierra Madre Oriental. In the early eighteenth century settlers pushed into Texas, crossing the Rio Grande at the presidio of San Juan de Bautista, a few miles up the river from Laredo. From here the main route continued to San Antonio and the east Texas missions and presidios located along the present day Texas-Louisiana border.

The frontier line that moved into Texas by-passed the area called Seno Mexicano, which extended from the Pánuco River at Tampico to the Nueces River in Texas. Inland it stretched to the Sierra Madre Oriental, a distance that varied from one hundred to one hundred fifty miles. The region encompassed the present day Mexican state of Tamaulipas and the southern triangle of Texas below the Nueces River. Much of it was a coastal plain expanding inland to

the Sierra Madre Oriental. In the southern and central parts of the state of Tamaulipas there are two mountain spurs extending into the coastal plain and separated by the Rio Soto la Marina. Along the western boundary up to the Rio Grande, the Seno Mexicano region spread into the mountains of the Sierra Madre Oriental. It was a semi-arid region with a tropical climate. The mountain barrier, the unattractive climate and the lack of promising economic resources offered little attraction to Spanish colonization.

Added to these obstacles was the fact that the Indians of the Seno Mexicano were not about to welcome settlers and soldiers whom at best they viewed as intruders. Furthermore many of the Indians had a score to settle with the Spaniards since many of the natives had been forced to work for them. Such forced Indian labor was a common practice in Spanish settlements and a considerable number of the Seno Mexicano inhabitants were refugees from the hated system of forced labor. This accounts for their frequent raids of Spanish settlements along the western border of the area. To end these raids was a strong motivating factor for Spanish colonization of the region.

The Spanish were aware of the threat that foreign powers such as England and France posed to the Seno Mexicano as long as it remained unoccupied. Frequently the foreign threat as in the case of Texas at the beginning of the eighteenth century weighed more heavily in royal considerations than annoying Indian raids.

INDIANS IN THE SENO MEXICANO

There were approximately eighty Indian tribes in the region prior to the arrival of the Spanish colonists in the middle of the eighteenth century. Early Spanish accounts indicate that some thirty different dialects were spoken, which frequently showed much similarity and thereby indicated that many dialects originated from a trunk language. For instance, the Huastec group near the Pánuco River spoke a Mayan dialect.

The tribes tended to live in communities consisting of four hundred to five hundred persons. Each tribe was headed by a cacique who often gained leadership through strength and boldness. There also is evidence that at times a number of tribal chiefs joined to form a confederation. Most writers on the subject, however, find the tribal organization more common than a confederation of tribes.

The Early Spanish chroniclers referred to the Indians in the Seno Mexicano by the general term of Chichimecas. The term had originally been used by the Aztec people in designating the Indians living in northern Mexico on the central plateau. As the Spanish frontier moved northward on the plateau many of these Indians sought refuge in the Sierra Madre Oriental and the Seno Mexicano.

Without listing all the eighty some tribes who inhabited the region, we need note only the most important, such as the Huastec, Olives, Janambres, Pisones, Karankawa and Apaches. The Huastec, the most culturally advanced of all the tribes,were the cultural heirs of the Olmec civilization.. They came under the Aztec domination shortly before the arrival of the Spaniards in the early sixteenth century. A neighboring tribe of the Huastec was the group called Olives. They, like the Huastec, were sedentary and spoke a language related to the Huastec tongue. To the northwest or in the southwest area of the Seno Mexicano lived the Janambres and Pisones. According to early Spanish reports their mode of existence was very primitive and nomadic. Along the Texas gulf coast area lived the Karankawa, whom Alvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca had encountered during his trip through Texas during the 1530's. Best known to students of history in the United States are the Apaches who penetrated the Seno Mexicano territory, on the northwest. They were nomadic and became more so after they acquired the horse from the Spaniards.

Tribes of lesser significance inhabited the Rio Grande area between present day Roma and Reynosa. In the Mier and Roma area lived the Garzas, Zalayas and Malahuecos. Around the Camargo and Rio Grande City area roamed the Tareguanos, Pajaritos, Paysanos, Venados, Cueros Quemados and Guajolotes. The Comecrudes, Tejones y Sacatiles, Pintos, Nazas and Narices lived in the vicinity of Reynosa. It should be remembered that the names of these tribes were frequently not their original names, but rather names given to them by the Spaniards.

Little is known about these people. Arrowheads, crude hunting tools and a few burial remains uncovered near Roma are the sole remaining evidence of their existence. All of these finds point to a hunting and nomadic life. There is evidence that some of their words may still be present in the language of the Mexican American people in the south Texas area. More of the Indian legacy can be detected in the food that these people gathered, such as *pitayas* (a cactus berry), *maguacata* (fruit of the ebony tree), *mesquitamal* (mesquite bean), *panal de miel* (wild honey), *nopalitos* (prickly pear), *pichilinge* (a red berry from the cactus plant), and *chágüite* (hard gum excreted in the bark of the mesquite tree). The Indians also drank *peyotl*, which had medical and tonic qualities and served as drink for religious ceremonies.

Another remaining remnant from these Indians is the herbs used in effecting cures. Here can be mentioned *yerba anís* for calming a frightened person; *estafiate, muicle, cuajil, yerba buena* and *manzanilla* to cure various types of indigestion; *yerba del zape* to remove warts; *sacate de limón* to heal sore throats; *governadora* to cure rheumatism; *cenizo* to relieve colds; *mejorana* to stop colic and *amorgoso* to reduce fever. All or some of these herb cures may not have been indigenous to these Indian tribes but could easily have originated with Indians in central Mexico and then over the centuries spread northward, especially by the Indian and mestizo settlers who came with the arrival of the Spanish colonizers in the area during the eighteenth century.

Except for the Huastec and Olives Indians both early Spanish chroniclers and later historians found the Indians of the Seno Mexicano to be of a very primitive people. The Spanish viceroy, the Marquis of Altamira, stated that they

> live without religion, without fixed habitation, without dress, who like wild and wandering beasts, occupy the coast of the Mexican Gulf, its ports, its famous salines, rich rivers, healthful plains, fertile lands, and valuable minerals. With their murders, thefts, fires, and all kinds of inhuman atrocities, they desolate entire jurisdictions, provinces, cities, villages, and Christian settlements along the southern, western, and northern confines of their haunts. They obstruct the roads, paralyze commerce, and occasion incalculable losses to the royal treasury daily with the increased annual costs involved in the maintenance of presidios and the organization of campaigns.1

The dismal picture of the Indians in the area as given by the Spanish viceroy is repeated by such present day historians of the lower Rio Grande Valley as J. Lee Stambaugh and his wife, Lillian. [2] Their account stressed the continued fear of the Spaniards regarding the menace that these Indians presented to the Spanish settlers all along the frontier of the Seno Mexicano. It was precisely this threat plus the fear of potential foreign incursions that caused the Spanish officials to take determined action to occupy and settle the area in the middle of the eighteenth century.

The other version of the story is the Indian one, unfortunately unrecorded. If their story had been told one can be certain it would have related the Indians' anxiety and fear of unwelcome foreigners, whose entrance into the region posed a threat to their property, life styles and very lives.

1 Cited in Paul Horgan, *Great River: The Rio Grande in North American History* (New York, Chicago and San Francisco: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1954), pp 341-342.

2 J. Lee Stambaugh and Lillian J. Stambaugh, *The Lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas* (San Antonio, Texas: The Naylor Company, 1954), p. 26.

EARLY ENTRADAS INTO THE SENO MEXICANO

The story of the first Spanish entrada into Seno Mexicano unfolded with the activities of Diego Velásquez de Cuéllar, governor of Cuba. In 1516 he sent Captain Francisco Hernández de Córdova to explore the mouth of the Pánuco River. This was followed by a second expedition in 1518 headed by Juan de Grijalva y Cuéllar, who explored the coastal area from the Pánuco River to the mouth of the Rio Grande. None of these exploratory ventures resulted in settlement of the area. The next move of the governor of Cuba was to authorize the Cortés expedition into central Mexico, about which he had second thoughts when he rightly suspected that the conquistador of Mexico desired to be governor of Mexico.

While Velásquez was preoccupied with the activities of Cortés in the Aztec Empire, Francisco de Garay, governor of Jamaica, sent Captain Alonso Alvarez de Piñeda with three ships and one hundred men to conquer the Pánuco area. The Huastec Indians successfully blocked the Captain's efforts at conquest of the territory.

With the downfall of the Aztec Empire in 1521, Cortés focused his colonizing efforts on the Pánuco area. By means of an expedition consisting of one hundred twenty cavalry, three hundred infantry and 40,000 Tlaxcaltecan allies, he was able to defeat the Huastec and establish the first successful Spanish settlement near the mouth of the Pánuco River. This successful venture did not stop the governor of Jamaica from making yet another effort to bring the area under his control in 1523. Cortés had little difficulty in halting this attempt especially after it became clear that the king of Spain declared the area to be part of Cortés's jurisdiction. Armed with this official declaration the first governor of Mexico sent Nuño de Guzmán in 1524 to govern the province of Pánuco.

In 1530 the Franciscans started the first mission for the Huastec and Pames Indians. Among the early Franciscan missionaries the name of Padre Andrés de Olmos is most significant. He had accompanied Juan de Zumárraga, the first bishop of Mexico, to the New World and arrived in Pánuco in 1532. To Padre Andrés goes the credit of founding the Villa de San Luis de Tampico in 1560. The year following the arrival of the Franciscan missionary, Nuño de Guzmán was removed from the governorship because of abuse and enslavement of the Indians.

While Nuño de Guzmán was governor of Pánuco, Pánfilo de Narváez in 1527 headed a venture to settle Florida. The ill-fated expedition was attacked by Indians on the western coast of Florida. The group then prepared to move along the gulf coast area

westward with hope of reaching the Pánuco settlement. On their way to the gulf coast area of Texas, they suffered additional hardships and loss of lives. Among the four survivors, who eventually reached the island near Galveston was Núñez Cabeza de Vaca. He and his three companions made their way westward to the Rio Grande, Chihuahua and the western coast of Mexico, arriving in Mexico City in 1536. The tale of their adventures, especially the report of the Seven Cities of Gold, sparked the Francisco Vásquez de Coronado expedition a few years later. The significance of this entrada is the first recorded report on Indian life and terrain in the southern part of Texas.

Late in the sixteenth century there was another entrada into the area that bears mentioning, namely, that of Luis de Carvajal y de la Cueva, a Portuguese Jew. In 1583 this man was named governor and given the right to colonize the area which roughly covered the present day state of Nuevo León plus parts of San Luis Potosí, Zacatecas, Durango, Nayarit, Sinaloa, Chihuahua, Coahuila, Texas and the Seno Mexicano. Carvajal arrived in Tampico in 1583 and from here he traveled in a northwesterly direction through the Seno Mexicano toward the present site of Monterrey. The governor of Nuevo León, as this new province was called, initiated the founding of Monterrey, Monclova and probably Cerralvo between 1583 and 1596. The governor's efforts at developing these settlements and starting others were abruptly terminated when he had to appear before the Inquisition on the charge of practicing Judaism. He was found guilty and sent into exile.

Since the grant to colonize Nuevo León had vague and expansive boundary lines it resulted in jurisdictional disputes with the neighboring provinces. Such was particularly the case in the eighteenth century when Seno Mexicano became the province of Nuevo Santander under the governorship of Escandón.

Whereas the sixteenth century entradas can best be described as exploratory ventures, the entradas of the following century resulted from missionary efforts to Christianize the Indians in the southwestern corner of the Seno Mexicano. Between 1617 and 1627 Fray Juan Bautista Mollinedo, a Dominican missionary, founded missions at Tula and Palmillas, located in the southwestern corner of the territory. These and other later nearby missions constantly faced Indian attacks. The missionaries' pleas to the royal authorities for protection were not always answered and as a result some of the missions had to be abandoned.

Not only did the Indian raids threaten the existence of the missions, but they even posed a threat to the more permanent Spanish settlements along the southwestern border of the Seno Mexicano, such as Querétaro, San Luis Potosí and Matehuala. Even here aid from Mexico was not always forthcoming to repel the attacks. Sometimes the settlers in these towns offered the attacking Indians gifts with the hope of buying them off.

Neither were the Spanish settlers along the western border of the Seno Mexicano immune to these periodic raids. Reports are sufficiently frequent to show Spanish enslavement of Indians and when the enslaved Indians escaped to the Seno Mexicano sanctuary, they returned to do vengeance on their former masters. The hostility of the Indians and the frequent raids sharply curtailed missionary penetrations into the area. As late as 1704 Viceroy Francsico Fernández de la Cueva was greatly concerned about the problem. He proposed a pacification program for the Indians northeast of Quéretaro, known as the Sierra Gorda district. After a series of wars against the Indians the viceroy was able to conclude a treaty with them in 1715. In the treaty the Indians promised not to molest the nearby Spanish settlements but the Indians retained complete freedom in the Sierra Gorda area. At best it was a truce rather than a peace settlement. Furthermore a peace agreement with one or several tribes did not prevent other tribes who were not a party to the agreement to continue their raiding activities. The uncertainty and threatening climate plus the continued pleas of missionaries and civil officials for aid against Indian attacks made it imperative for the Spanish government to face the dangerous situation. This was the picture that Escandón faced when in the early 1700's he arrived in Querétaro to assume the governorship of the district.

Aside from the continued Indian attacks all along the border districts of the Seno Mexicano, the region was also exposed to pirate attacks along the gulf coast. Such an attack took place in 1684 when the French pirate, Lorenzo Jacome, sacked Tampico. It also was in the same year that Robert Chevallier de la Salle appeared in the Pánuco area. This aroused Spanish fears concerning French ambitions in the Seno Mexicano and Texas. In fact, it was La Salle's attempt to establish a fort on the Texas coast that sparked the settlement of Texas at the beginning of the eighteenth century. Even after the initial efforts to settle east Texas and San Antonio, Texas, the coastal area from Corpus Christi to Tampico lay exposed to pirate attacks and foreign colonization ventures. These threats alone made it urgent for Spain no longer to continue to by-pass the Seno Mexicano.

By 1700 the Seno Mexicano had a settlement at the mouth of the Pánuco River and a few scattered missions around Tula and Malmillas. The vast portion of the region all the way north to the Nueces River in Texas remained under the control of some eighty Indian tribes. The entradas of the 1500's and

the missionaries of the 1600's had made the Spanish government aware of life, climate and geography in the area. This knowledge helped prepare the way for the successful colonization venture in the middle of the eighteenth century.

EARLY CAREER OF JOSE DE ESCANDON

Little data can be found on the early life of Escandón. Most of the information about the man dates from his arrival in Querétaro in 1721, especially after he was appointed governor in the 1740's of the Seno Mexicano. The records show that he was born into a wealthy and prominent Spanish family on May 19, 1700, in Soto la Marina on the northern coast of Spain. The area consisted of a narrow coastal plain hemmed in by the mountain range called Cordillera Cantábrica.

Available records tell us little about his boyhood years. It is known that he chose a military career at age fifteen. Shortly thereafter he came to Mérida, Yucatán, where he served as a cadet in the Compañía de Caballeros Montados Encomenderos, a cavalry company. He performed meritorious services in warding off English attacks on the coast of Campeche. This led to a military promotion and a transfer to the militia in Querétaro in 1721.

While in the Querétaro militia he gained further military fame. In 1727 he subdued an Indian uprising at Celaya and for his services he received the rank of sergeant major of the regiment. Five years later he suppressed another Indian uprising in the vicinity of Real de Minas de Guanajuato. He achieved similar success a short time thereafter at Irapuato. His most successful venture came in 1734 when he put down a rebellion of 10,000 Indians in the district of San Miguel el Grande. Not only was it a victorious military venture, but his humane treatment of four hundred Indian prisoners commanded the respect of all.

In the midst of these military activities he took time out to return to Spain in 1727. It was at this time that he married María Antonia de Ozío y Ocampo, who died in Querétaro in 1736. Out of this union was born Ana María, who became a nun in the convent of Santa Clara in Querétaro, and a son named José. Within a short time he was back in Querétaro to continue his military career.

His continued victories in military campaigns against the Indians in the Querétaro district and his successful pacification work among the Indians attracted the attention of royal officials in Mexico City. In 1740 his services were rewarded with the rank of colonel of his regiment. A more significant promotion came the following year when he was appointed lieutenant captain general of the Sierra Gorda district. In this new position he conducted four expeditions into the Sierra Gorda district without any cost to the royal treasury. The expedition provided him with valuable knowledge of the region, which stood him in good stead later when he organized his conquest and colonization expeditions into the Seno Mexicano.

A new threat loomed on the horizon in 1742 when word arrived of a planned English attack on the port of Veracruz. Escandón immediately volunteered his services and those of his troops without seeking compensation from the government. The attack never materialized, but the volunteered services were not forgotten by the king, who was most interested in administering his New World possessions with a minimum of royal expenditures.

As commander of the Sierra Gorda district, Escandón continued to put down Indian revolts in the Querétaro vicinity. Along with his military duties he carried the title *visitador* of mission. The position required him to oversee and supply the missions in his district. In carrying out the function he repopulated some of the abandoned missions and founded new ones. He refounded the mission of Jaumave in 1743 and the one of Palmillas two years later.

Much of his success in these ventures was attributed to his ability of pacifying the Indians. It was a pacification program of a strict disciplinarian. However his strict rule was tempered with offering the Indians in the missions a secure livelihood and gifts. In spite of the humane gestures, Escandón was criticized by some of his subordinates for subjugating the Indians too harshly. These same charges were lodged against him later when he served as governor of Nuevo Santander. Some writers suspect that the reports may have stemmed more from jealousy of his rivals since when investigated they proved unfounded. While there may have been substance to some of these accusations, it is worthwhile to note that relatively few Indians perished while he governed the Sierra Gorda district and later the province of Nuevo Santander. In fact, during the five years following his death in 1770 more Indians perished in the Nuevo Santander province than did during his entire years of governorship. There were few, if any, conquistadores during the colonial era who could match such an enviable record.

Escandón not only proved himself a capable military leader and administrator, but he also demonstrated a good business mind. His merchant activities proved highly prosperous both in Querétaro and later in the province of Nuevo Santander. He owned textile mills in Querétaro and cattle ranches. These successful commercial ventures apparently were another factor in arousing the jealousy of his rivals. His enemies

accused him of defrauding the royal treasury in amassing the fortune. Again, as we shall see at the end of our story, these accusations proved groundless. The main significance of these business ventures is that they provided the commander with the needed financial resources to carry out subsequent colonizing expeditions into the Seno Mexicano. The income gave him a decided advantage over his rivals who sought the right to colonize in northeastern Mexico. Escandón had proved his worth as an administrator, pacificator of Indians and a merchant. The crown could not easily overlook these impressive credentials when the time came to select the man to carry out the conquest and colonization of the Seno Mexicano.

PLANS FOR THE CONQUEST OF THE SENO MEXICANO

The pleas of missionaries, civil officials and settlers near and in the Seno Mexicano in the early 1700's were heard with greater attention in higher governing circles. French expansion in the Louisiana area made the exposed gulf coast area along the Seno Mexicano region vulnerable to French intrusions. Since the Bourbon house after 1700 ruled in both Spain and France, the French threat to the northeastern frontier was somewhat minimized. In fact, France and Spain were allies in a series of colonial wars in North America beginning in 1701 with Queen Anne's War to 1763, the end of the French and Indian Wars. During these hostilities France and Spain faced England and her allies. Although the European interests of the warring parties frequently carried higher priorities than the American ones, the New World colonial interests were not overlooked. England's possession of the colony of Jamaica, a former Spanish possession in the Caribbean, posed a threat to Spain's unoccupied areas in Mexico.

The first two plans for conquering and colonizing the Seno Mexicano were proposed in 1736. Narciso Barquín de Montecuesta, former *corregidor* of Santiago de los Valles near Tampico, proposed a colonization plan for the southern part of the region. He pointed to the need for exploiting the salt deposits north of Tampico, which could supply all of colonial Mexico. To protect the area he called for the establishment of a fort to be manned by fifty cavalry men. He estimated the cost of the venture at 14,000 pesos annually and a 4,000 peso salary for himself. He planned to recruit settlers from the Tampico area.

The second proposal was that of José Antonio Fernández de Jáuregui y Urrutia, governor of Nuevo León. His plan called for recruiting settlers from his province. Like the Barquín de Montecuesta plan, it sought royal financial support and special privileges for the settlers, such as land grants and tax exemptions for a limited period of time. It differed from the former plan in that it called for colonization of the northern portion of the region. The governor supported his proposal by pointing to the threat of foreign invasions. He added that the soil was fertile and well suited for agriculture.

Two years later Antonio Ladrón de Guevara, a rancher from Nuevo León, presented his project to the viceroy in Mexico City. Among his qualifications for colonization he noted his years of frontier experience, friendship with the Indians on the northern frontier and knowledge of the terrain. The proposal called for colonizing the northern portion of the region with settlers from the province of Nuevo León. In addition to offering land grants to his settlers, he planned to use *congregas*, which had been utilized in Nuevo León. The *congregas* permitted Spanish settlers to assume control or supervision over a designated number of Indians, which carried with it the responsibility of instructing the Indians in the Christian faith and providing for their physical needs. In return the Indians were obligated to render a moderate amount of personal service to their Spanish master. Like its predecessor, the *encomienda* introduced by Hernán Cortés shortly after the downfall of the Aztec empire, it led to frequent abuses whereby the obligations of the Spanish master were not carried out but the Indian workers were exploited. In cases where exploitation was especially severe, Indians frequently escaped from the system and sought refuge in the Seno Mexicano. The need for more Indian workers caused the Spanish settlers to send out slave catchers to recruit more Indians for the *congregas*. The practice frequently resulted in the separation of Indian families and left a hostile legacy among the Indians against Spanish settlers. Often the Indians who fled the system or suffered from the recruiting raids sought revenge by raiding Spanish settlements. The destruction and frequency of the Indian raids caused the governor of Nuevo León to abolish the system of *congregas*.

Ladrón de Guevara sought royal financial support for his colonization venture. He thought that such support was necessary to cover the initital costs of the project as well as the military campaigns that might have to be waged against the Indians. In return the king could expect profitable returns through the exploitation of saline and silver deposits in the colonized area.

All three plans for colonization of the Seno Mexicano were first submitted to the viceroy in Mexico City. The viceroy then forwarded the proposal to the Council of the Indies and the king for further action. As a result of the deliberations by the

Council, King Philip V issued a *cédula* dated July 10, 1739. The decree ordered the calling of a meeting in Mexico City to be composed of the viceroy, members of the Mexico City audiencia and other persons familiar with the situation in the Seno Mexicano. The meeting or junta was given the charge to select the best qualified person for the colonization venture and give the designated colonizer the means to carry out the project. The *cédula* carried an added note that showed the crown to be favorably disposed toward the proposal of Ladrón de Guevara. The royal disposition caused Barquín de Montecuesta and Fernández de Jáuregui to withdraw their proposals, thinking that their chances for obtaining permission for the venture were very dim.

At this point in the proceedings Ladrón de Guevara decided that more pressure on the junta was necessary to effect a favorable decision. In order to demonstrate to the committee in a most dramatic fashion that he had excellent rapport with the frontier Indians, he liberally granted official titles to some Indians and had them appear before the junta to testify in his behalf. Members of the selection body were aware of the hated *congrega* system that the applicant had utilized in the province of Nuevo León. They were fully aware of the fact that the use of the *congrega* was a root cause for the many indian rebellions along the western boundary of the Seno Mexicano. A very influential voice in the junta's deliberation was Juan Rodríguez de Albuerne, Marquis of Altamira, who urged his colleagues and the viceroy not to appoint the man since he did not want to see a repetition of the hated *congregas* in the Seno Mexicano. He further informed the viceroy that the applicant was unscrupulous and immoral, leaving illegitimate children in every Indian village he visited.

Ladrón de Guevara was not one easily deterred by such unfavorable reaction to his application. He wasted no time taking his case to the royal court in Spain. The answer of the king made it clear that he was displeased with Ladrón de Guevara's behavior, especially in granting indiscriminately military titles to the Indians and bringing them to Mexico City to pressure the junta for a favorable decision. All of this was stated in the *cédula*, dated June 13, 1743, plus the reiteration of the crown's policy for the colonization of the Seno Mexicano as was stated in the earlier *cédula* of 1739. In effect, this meant that the crown would accept the decision of the junta after the matter had been sufficiently studied.

The junta was in no hurry to reach a final decision. The influential voice of the marquis of Altamira was very much in evidence in the ongoing deliberations. He strongly opposed the selection of Ladrón de Guevara to head the colonization work. His tactic was to delay the decision until a more qualified candidate could be considered. In the meantime the junta continued its exhaustive investigation into the colonization plans of the Seno Mexicano. The thoroughness of the studies is evidenced by the fact that the compiled information consisted of fifty large copy books. The study had started during the later half of 1739 and continued off and on for seven years.

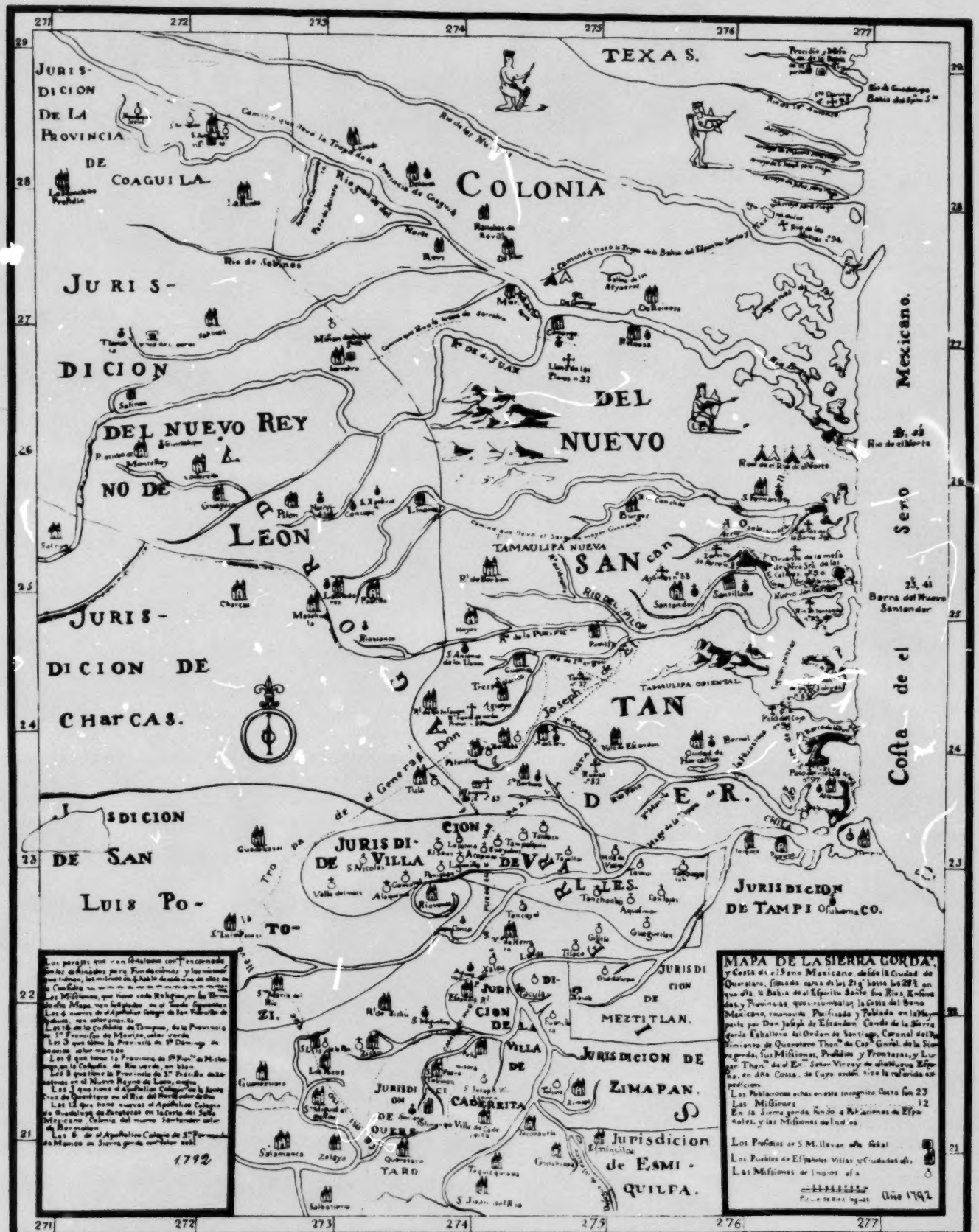
Time was on the side of the marquis of Altamira, who utilized the junta's findings to argue against the appointment of Ladrón de Guevara. At the same time, he had ample time to survey the field for other possible candidates to carry out the project. By August 21, 1746, when the junta was prepared to make its recommendation to Viceroy Francisco de Güemes y Horcasitas, Count of Revillagigedo, a new prospect had appeared on the horizon. It was none other than Escandón, whose colonization and pacification work in the Querétaro district had favorably attracted the junta's attention. With the advice of the marquis of Altamira, the junta decided to consult him about his interest in the matter. His reply was an offer that the junta found difficult to resist.

APPOINTMENT OF ESCANDON AS COLONIZER

Under the section treating Escandón's early career we noted his successful pacification and colonization work in the Querétaro area. These achievements attracted the attention of Spanish officials in Mexico as they were studying candidates and colonization plans for the Seno Mexicano. Not surprisingly the junta, which for seven years had been studying colonization plans and credentials of interested candidates, decided on September 3, 1746, to recommend Escandón as the man to carry out the pacification and settlement of the Seno Mexicano. The junta's decision was immediately accepted by the viceroy, who stated his official approval as follows:

> Convinced in my mind that this undertaking had long been neglected out of all proportion to its importance in the service of God, the king, and the state, and that the time had arrived to offer Our Lord not one but innumerable souls from among the numerous barbarous nations that roamed the land and to redeem the lives, honor, and wealth of the settlers that lived in their vicinity, I accepted the suggestion, honoring Escandón with the title of my lieutenant general, not only in order to distinguish him from other governors . . . who were ordered to cooperate with him, but also in order to compensate him for his labors and the expense incurred in the pacification [of Sierra Gorda]. This should encourage him to bear those that may arise in the new explorations. 3

3 Cited in Carlos E. Castañeda, *Our Catholic Heritage in Texas 1519-1936* (Austin, Texas: Von Boeckmann-Jones Company, 1938), III, 139.



MAP OF NUEVO SANTANDER IN 1792

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The official appointment designated the appointee not only governor but also the personal and immediate representative of the viceroy. This invested Escandón with powers enjoyed by no other official in New Spain.

Along with the appointment came instructions from the crown stating what the government hoped to achieve in the colonization of the Seno Mexicano. These called for the exploration and subjugation of the region. The king desired that the Indians be congregated into missions and Spanish settlers brought into the area. To carry out these directives required a superb organizer, a competent administrator and an outstanding leader. Escandón had already demonstrated these abilities in his pacification work and the founding of missions and settlements in the Sierra Gorda. The vast area of the Seno Mexicano would require even a greater test of his demonstrated qualities. In order to begin the project, Escandón first had to explore the area. The exploratory expedition would give him the necessary information about the Indians and land in order to plan and carry out a successful colonization venture.

ESCANDON'S ENTRADA INTO THE SENO MEXICANO

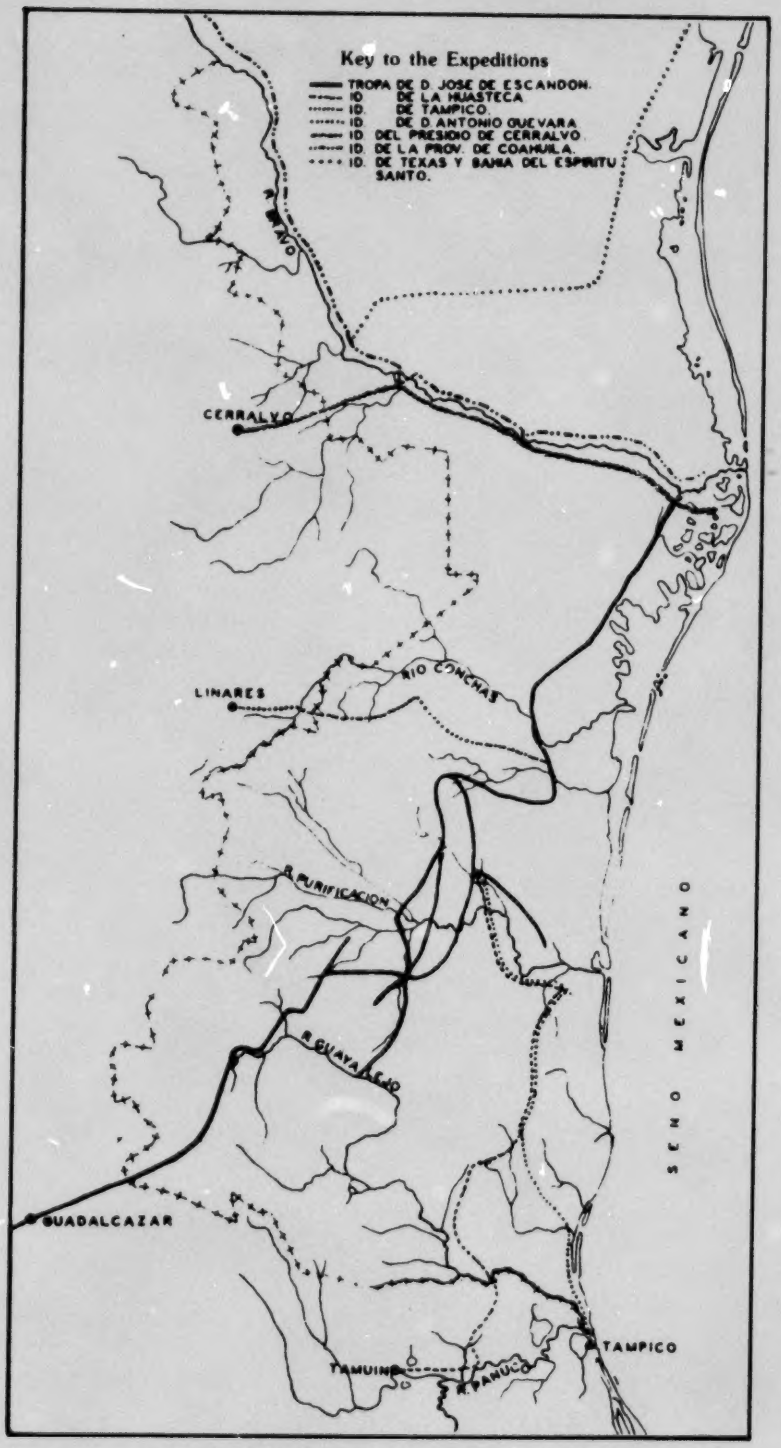
When Escandón received word in September of 1746 that he had been appointed to head the colonization project, he immediately set about to develop plans for the inspection of the Seno Mexicano. The viceroy's and the junta's instructions called first for the exploration of the region and the subjugation of hostile Indians. In accordance with these directives, the governor first needed to map out an initial entry plan for the area and then recruit men and supplies required for the exploratory tour. The extensive planning, the rounding up of volunteers for the venture and gaining the cooperation of the governors, whose provinces bordered on the Seno Mexicano, required several months of work. It may seem unduly long, but it does testify to Escandón's concern over minute details. That fact that the entrada was executed without a single loss of life shows that the long time utilized in planning was well spent.

The newly appointed colonizer proposed that the entrada be made from seven different points. The seven point entry had a number of advantages. First of all it would reduce the expense for each soldier on the expedition since he would never be further away from his home base than fifty leagues.[4] In addition the absence from the home base was not expected to exceed thirty days. These were important considerations since the soldiers on the inspection tour were obligated to bear some of their personal expenses, such as providing pack mules. The rewards for these sacrifices were favorable considerations of subsequently becoming the first settlers in the area. The recruitment of soldiers along the borderland and area of the Seno Mexicano carried the added advantage of having men experienced in frontier living. Escandón also noted the military advantage in a multiple entry. Should the Indians offer resistance to the entrada, the colonizer felt they would be overawed by the entry of seven different expeditions. Finally the commander reasoned that earlier colonization failures of the region were partially due to lack of cooperation on the part of the governors whose provinces bordered the Seno Mexicano. The seven point entry made the cooperation of the neighboring governors imperative.

The seven point penetration called for convergence of all the expeditions at the mouth of the Rio Grande. It was expected that the mission could be accomplished within thirty days. The seven selected points of departure were the following. From Tampico would come one hundred forty soldiers under the command of the alcalde of that settlement. This group was to travel directly northward along the coast, gathering information on the Indians, rivers, estuaries and salt deposits. A little to the southeast of Tampico was Villa de Valles, present day Ciudad de Valles. From here two companies of two hundred soldiers under the commands of Juan Francisco de Berverena and Felipe de Apresa Moctezuma were to move along the eastern slopes of the Sierra Gorda mountains and link up with the northward bound Tampico group. The third departure point was to have its beginning in Querétaro where Escandón, the commander of the entire entrada, was assembling some of his men. From here he planned to move northeastward crossing the Sierra Madre Oriental at Tula and then down to Jaumave, where he expected to gather additional men and supplies.Since the commander needed more time to travel the extra distance from Querétaro to Jaumave, his officially designated departure point, his preparation for the entrada started earlier than the other expeditions. From Jaumave Escandón charted his trip in a northeasterly direction, eventually linking up with the Tampico and Villa de Valles groups. The route of the Escandón group was in the midst of all the entrada expeditions and thereby enabled the commander to remain in close contact with all the parties.

Two points of entry were selected on the western border of the Seno Mexicano - namely Linares and Cerralvo, both in the province of Nuevo León. The two parties were to move in a westerly direction. The

[4] A league is a unit of distance that measures approximately 2.6 miles.



SEVEN POINT PENETRATION OF THE SENO MEXICANO IN 1746

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Linares group was expected to meet the three groups coming from the south, while the Cerralvo contingent would move along the Rio Grande River to its mouth.

Monclova, in the province of Coahuila, was designated as the sixth point of departure. The plans called for this group to march northeastward, cross the Rio Grande at San Juan Bautista, a little below the present day site of Eagle Pass, and then proceed down the river to its mouth.

The seventh departure point was La Bahía in Texas, near present day Corpus Christi. This expedition was composed of twenty soldiers from the presidio and a like number of soldiers from Los Adaes on the Texas-Louisiana border. This party was expected to travel along the coastal area into the lower Rio Grande valley and link up with the Monclova group.

The instructions to all the leaders of the expeditions called for written reports on such matters as streams, hills, mountains and number and types of Indians. In short they were asked to record all they saw. Escandón's orders also carried a strong admonition not to deprive the Indians of their land or to antagonize them in any way. The commander, a man experienced in dealing with Indians, understood only too well that a friendly Indian population was indispensable for his future colonization project.

Escandón had started preparations for his departure from Querétaro in September of 1746. These were completed by the beginning of January of the following year. The party that accompanied him from Querétaro included two missionaries, Fray José de Velasco and Fray Lorenzo de Medina, a captain, two sergeants, ten soldiers and servants. Before crossing the Sierra Madre Oriental, the group passed through San Luis Potosí where Escandón obtained the services of Agustín de Jesús and forty soldiers. Next he marched to Tula, where Antonio de Fernández de Acuña and his one hundred fifty soldiers volunteered their services. The final stopover before entering the Seno Mexicano was Jaumave. Here the marquis of Castile de Asia and his ten soldiers offered their services as did the *alcalde mayor* of Laboradores and his ten soldiers. The number of volunteers was more than adequate for the commander's needs. He decided that one hundred fifty soldiers were sufficient for his expedition.

Nothing was left to chance. Escandón supplied his expedition with munitions, tents, hatchets, cutlasses, food, tobacco and haberdashery. In addition he obtained the services of a surgeon, a horseshoer, several muleteers, fifty servants and thirty Indians. He also sent orders for a ship to sail from Tampico to survey the mouth of the Rio Grande.

Escandón's contingent left Jaumave on January 24, 1747. As the group moved down the eastern slope of the Sierra Madre Oriental they noted the fertile valley, which they found well suited for agriculture. The march continued in a northeasterly direction towards present day Soto la Marina. Here they found fertile land and good fishing.

Already it was the beginning of February and so as to meet their time schedule, Escandón decided to push northward. The party crossed a highland area which they called Cerrito del Ayre. It was here that they reported encountering barbarous Indians whom they offered gifts. The Indians offered no resistance. The Cerrito de Ayre plain was also the point where they hoped to link up with the parties coming from Tampico and Villa de Valles. After a brief stopover Escandón decided on February 7 not to wait for the southern expedition but to move northward so as to link up with the contingents coming from the provinces of Nuevo León, Coahuila and Texas. On this final leg of the trip the group encountered a primitive tribe of four hundred Indians whose chief was Santiago. Again the commander was able to pass through the area without Indian resistance.

On February 10 the Escandón party arrived at a big lagoon near the mouth of the Conchos River. The lagoon contained valuable salt deposits. Near it lived some three hundred Indian families, who showed no hostility to the newcomers. It was here that the commander met the Linares contingent of fifty-three soldiers under the command of Antonio Ladrón de Guevara. Before moving on to the mouth of the Rio Grande, Escandón ordered the establishment of a camp at the mouth of the Conchos River. In this camp he left most of his party and selected Guevara and fifty mounted soldiers to accompany him on the trip northward.

The group reached the mouth of the Rio Grande on February 24 and set up a camp on the south bank of the river, about twelve leagues from the gulf. He found the area well suited for ranching and farming. He estimated the Indian inhabitants in the area to be 2,500, who swore allegiance to Chief Santiago. His reports indicated an abundance of horses, burros and deer. Further explorations revealed large salt deposits near Reynosa and north of Edinburg, Texas. While awaiting the arrival of the other expeditions, the group spent most of their time exploring the vicinity of the mouth of the river.

The Tampico group consisting of one hundred seventy-five men under the command of Francisco de Sosa departed on January 20. In their northward march along the coast, they reported good lands for settlement. On arriving near the Sierra de Tamaulipas, a spur of the Sierra Madre Oriental, they joined up with the Villa de Valles party, consisting of two hundred twenty men under the command of Juan Francisco de Berverena. The latter party had been delayed because of heavy rains and hot climate. As a

result the two southern contingents were delayed in their northward march and could not join the Escandón group as the original plans had called for. After the meeting of the two expeditions, Berverena took charge of the march and Sosa returned to Tampico. The former arrived at the Rio Grande shortly after Escandón had reached his destination.

The Nuevo León groups consisted of contingents from Linares and Cerralvo. We have already noted the Linares group under the command of Guevara, which joined Escandón on his northward march. The Cerralvo party consisted of some forty-two men under the command of Blas María de la Garza Falcón. It left Cerralvo on January 21 and followed the San Juan River to the Rio Grande and then moved along the south bank to its mouth, arriving there shortly before Escandón appeared. De la Garza Falcón's report indicated that the terrain along the upper Rio Grande was rugged but well suited for sheep and cattle. He also reported that the Indians in the area were chiefly runaways from the province of Nuevo León.

The Coahuila group consisting of fifty men under the command of Miguel de la Garza Falcón, a brother of the commander of the Cerralvo party, left Monclova on January 25. The march was northward crossing the Rio Grande at San Juan Bautista. They continued their march along the north side of the river, anticipating to meet the La Bahía del Espíritu Santo group traveling southward. This juncture was not realized for reasons that will be discussed later.

The Captain of the Coahuila group continued his march along the north bank of the river, roughly following the present day military highway to the mouth of the Rio Grande. He arrived at Escandón's camp at the beginning of March. In his report to Escandón, he described the area covered as barren, with inadequate water, scanty grass, small groves of mesquite and similar trees and generally unfit for settlement. The captain found the Indians friendly - an observation that later settlers found difficult to accept due to the presence of the Apache around Laredo.

The contingent from La Bahía del Espíritu Santo consisted of approximately fifty soldiers commanded by Captain Joaquín de Orobio Bazterra, who was the captain at the presidio of La Bahía. The group left La Bahía on January 29, 1747. On their southward march to the San Antonio River, they encountered severe winter weather, including an unusually heavy snowfall. Apparently the group arrived at a point on the river slightly west of present day Goliad. The captain immediately toured the area and reported plentiful grass and timber lands. He considered the area well suited for raising cattle and sheep. Further down the river, he explored the San Antonio Bay area, which he indicated was deep enough to accommodate small vessels that could be used to transport timber and promote fishing. He also found a small number of Indians in the area. One group, the Cujanes, consisted of about sixty families and another, the Karankawa, consisted of about one hundred families. The latter, according to the La Bahía commander, had resisted all efforts to be congregated into a mission.

Due to continued inclement weather, the party did not leave their San Antonio River camp until February 16. The captain continued his march to the Nueces River. Orobio Bazterra was the first one to report that the Nueces emptied into the gulf and not into the Rio Grande as previously was believed. He described the bay, today's Corpus Christi Bay, well suited for the establishment of a great city and missions for Indians in the area. His report revealed extensive plains along the river above the bay which he thought could be easily irrigated and put under cultivation.

The party continued its southward march on February 27 to present day Raymondville. On this stretch of the trip, the group found a more barren terrain and the lack of potable water became a serious problem for men and animals. In the Raymondville area, the Indians advised a more westerly trip to the Rio Grande. On March 8 the captain and his party terminated the trip on the Rio Grande at El Cántaro, which was a river crossing near present Roma. The entire march from the Guadalupe to the Rio Grande had covered eighty-five leagues. Orobio Bazterra was the first one to map parts of the area between the Nueces River and the Rio Grande. His report accurately described the Corpus Christi Bay and the potential of founding a large city at the bay. Considering his mission completed, he forwarded his written report to Escandón.

As noted previously, Escandón had already arrived at the mouth of the Rio Grande on February 24. The initial days were taken up in exploring the area. On February 27 he and a small group of men left the camp to explore the mouth of the river, which was about twelve leagues distant. Here he noted the possibility of developing an irrigation system. Although there was no bay he felt that small ships could enter the river for some sixty leagues.

The most interesting find near the mouth of the river was a group of dark skinned inhabitants, who undoubtedly were of African descent. It is not clear how these people arrived in the area. One report has it that they may be the descendants of abandoned African slaves, who were brought there by early settlers from the Caribbean Islands. Perhaps they were survivors from slave ships wrecked along the coast. At any rate these black people intermarried with the local Indians producing the descendants whom Escandón found living near the mouth of the river.

It was early March in 1747 when Escandón's exploration around the mouth of the river was completed. The expeditions coming from the south and west had arrived and the captains presented their reports on the areas covered. The expeditions had started in late January and Escandón hoped to complete the exploration of the Seno Mexicano within thirty days or so. It was therefore time to begin the return journey. The commander chose the coastal route, which took him directly south from the mouth of the Rio Grande to Soto la Marina. He crossed many small streams which he considered well suited for irrigation purposes. From Soto la Marina the group swung westward towards the Sierra Gorda. When he arrived at Jaumave and Tula, he started to disband some of his troops and with the remaining troops returned to Querétaro. The entire expedition involved seven hundred sixty-five soldiers and not a single life was lost, certainly no mean achievement. The investigation was complete but he still faced the task of drafting a report on what he observed and making recommendations for the settlement of the Seno Mexicano.

The report describing the geography, resources and Indians in the Seno Mexicano was finished on October 26, 1747. The recommendations called for starting with fourteen settlements, two of which were to be located on the Texas gulf coast area. Escandón advised that a villa be established at the Corpus Christi Bay. A little north from this location at the San Antonio Bay he urged that the presidio of La Bahía on the Guadalupe River be relocated near the bay of Corpus Christi. Close to the fort, he envisioned missions to congregate the Cujanes and Karankawa. After these Indians were christianized, he felt the presidio could be eliminated.

The other twelve settlements Escandón recommended to be founded in the present state of Tamaulipas. One of these was to be located near the junction of the San Juan River and the Rio Grande, across from Rio Grande City, Texas.

In the selection of settlement sites, agricultural and grazing lands weighed heavily in the commander's consideration. Furthermore transportation routes served as a criteria in recommending sites. The locations of some settlements were made between Indian tribes to keep the Indians disunited and thereby lessen the danger of united Indian uprisings. Another means to lessen the Indian danger was the selection of some sites at the foot of the Sierra Gorda, especially at those points where a river valley provided an easy escape route for raiding Indians into the mountainous interior.

In line with his earlier settlement experiences in the Sierra Gorda, he recommended that families from older settlements along the Seno Mexicano border be used to found the new villas. To make colonization attractive he proposed generous land grants and one hundred to two hundred pesos be awarded to each settler to cover the needed first year supplies.

The governor did not favor founding presidios. He felt that frontier civilian settlers had sufficient military experience to protect themselves. In fact this type of colonization required a minimum of numbers of soldiers for only two or three years. In selecting settlers, he desired to see that the soldiers who participated in the 1747 entrada be given first choice. He estimated that the total cost to the crown for settling five hundred families in the region would be around 58,000 pesos.

According to Escandón, each new settlement should be under a captain who had both civil and military duties. The captains of the villas would be under the captain-general who had jurisdiction over all the new villas. The headquarters of the captain-general, he thought, should be located on the Santander River, today the Soto la Marina River. The captain-general would be under the viceroy and audiencia in Mexico City.

He urged that near each settlement Indian missions should be founded, administered by missionaries responsible for the spiritual needs of both Spanish and Indian settlers. For this task he recommended the Franciscans from Mexico City and Zacatecas.

Escandón concluded his general report on October 26, 1747. The report was then forwarded to Fiscal Pedro de Vedoya y Osorio in Mexico City, who approved it and submitted it to Viceroy Francisco de Güemes y Horcasitas on December 13. The *fiscal* urged the viceroy to call immediately a general meeting of all officials to approve the colonization plan. The viceroy first desired the opinion of his trusted adviser, the marquis of Altamira. The adviser, like Vedoya, urged immediate acceptance of the plan and suggested that the Seno Mexicano be officially designated as Nuevo Santander. Next the proposal was submitted to the general junta, which was composed of some of the most distinguished officials in New Spain. After a meeting lasting several days the council on May 13, 1748, unanimously approved the colonization project. The junta also empowered the viceroy to select a qualified person to carry out the task. For the viceroy there was no other person more qualified that Escandón and on June 1 he was officially designated as governor, captain-general and personal representative of the viceroy in the new territory to be settled.

The actions of the colonial officials had to be approved by the crown. The viceroy sent a full report of Escandón's findings to the crown plus his recommendations and those of the junta. The royal decree of October 23, 1749, approved the actions of the

colonial officials and awarded the title of Count of Sierra Gorda to Escandón and made him a Knight of Santiago, the most distinguished military order in Spain. Equally important the crown promised financial support for the colonization venture.

SETTLEMENT OF NUEVO SANTANDER

Escandón began preparations for his colonization project soon after he received word from the viceroy on June 1, 1748, that he was the governor of the new territory. He was in Mexico City when the viceroy chose him governor of Nuevo Santander. Immediately he left for Querétaro, the site for his settlement preparations.

The viceroy sent word to all officials in the provinces bordering the Seno Mexicano to cooperate with Escandón's colonization of the territory. The governor selected one of his men to be in charge of gathering all the supplies needed for colonization. The proposed 58,000 pesos to cover the cost of supplies was found to be inadequate and had to be increased to 90,000 pesos.

Escandón planned to entice frontier families living along the Seno Mexicano border to form the core of his colonizers. He promised the families free land, fertile soil, tax exemptions for a period of ten years and opportunities to improve their economic lot. Each settler was granted one hundred to two hundred pesos to help defray moving costs. The persons who had been in the entrada of 1747 were given first consideration. In his recruitment Escandón overlooked no skills that he considered essential to successful settlement. Besides farmers and ranchers, he wanted men with building skills. Even mariners were included, who were to study the coastal regions for location of harbors. The advertisement campaign for settlement proved highly successful. According to Herbert Eugene Bolton the colonization expedition that left Querétaro at the end of December in 1748

> was probably the largest caravan that ever went to the interior provinces to found a colony. In his train were seven hundred and fifty soldiers, and more than twenty-five hundred settlers, Spaniards and Christianized Indians, while others joined him on the march. The families had their household and agricultural equipment, and they drove before them many thousand head of horses, cattle, burros, sheep and goats. In outward aspect the event was not unlike the Oregon migration or the Mormon trek of a century later on the United States frontier; the main difference was in the location of the initiative and in the character of the colonists. 5

The impressive caravan moved northward to San Luis Potosí and then northeastward into mountains to Tula. Along the way additional settlers joined the expedition. From Tula Escandón marched to the plains of Las Ruzias, where the first settlement was planted on December 25. The villa was christened Santa María de Llera and located directly south of present Ciudad Victoria. The location provided both ranch and farm land. Strategically located on the eastern slope of the Sierra Madre Oriental, the villa served as a barrier to Indians who used the area as a convenient escape route into the mountains.

The founding of a settlement had to be done in accordance with Spanish law and established customs. Escandón was not one given to parting from traditions. First of all the villa was located near a river or stream to insure an adequate water supply. The settlement started with the building of a garrison, which was to protect the settlers against possible Indian attacks. In the initial stages it resembled a military camp but gradually the garrison developed into a municipality. With the start of the garrison, a plaza for the new villa was located and streets were marked all around the plaza. This was in keeping with Spanish municipal traditions dating all the way back to Roman times. Next to the settlement were the common lands to be used for agriculture and grazing of livestock and a mission.

Over each settlement Escandón placed a captain who had both military and judicial duties. In the case of Santa María de Llera, the captain was José de Escajadillo, who was in charge of the eleven soldiers in the garrison and also exercised civil authority over the forty-four villa families. The soldiers were expected to marry into the families and eventually become settlers.

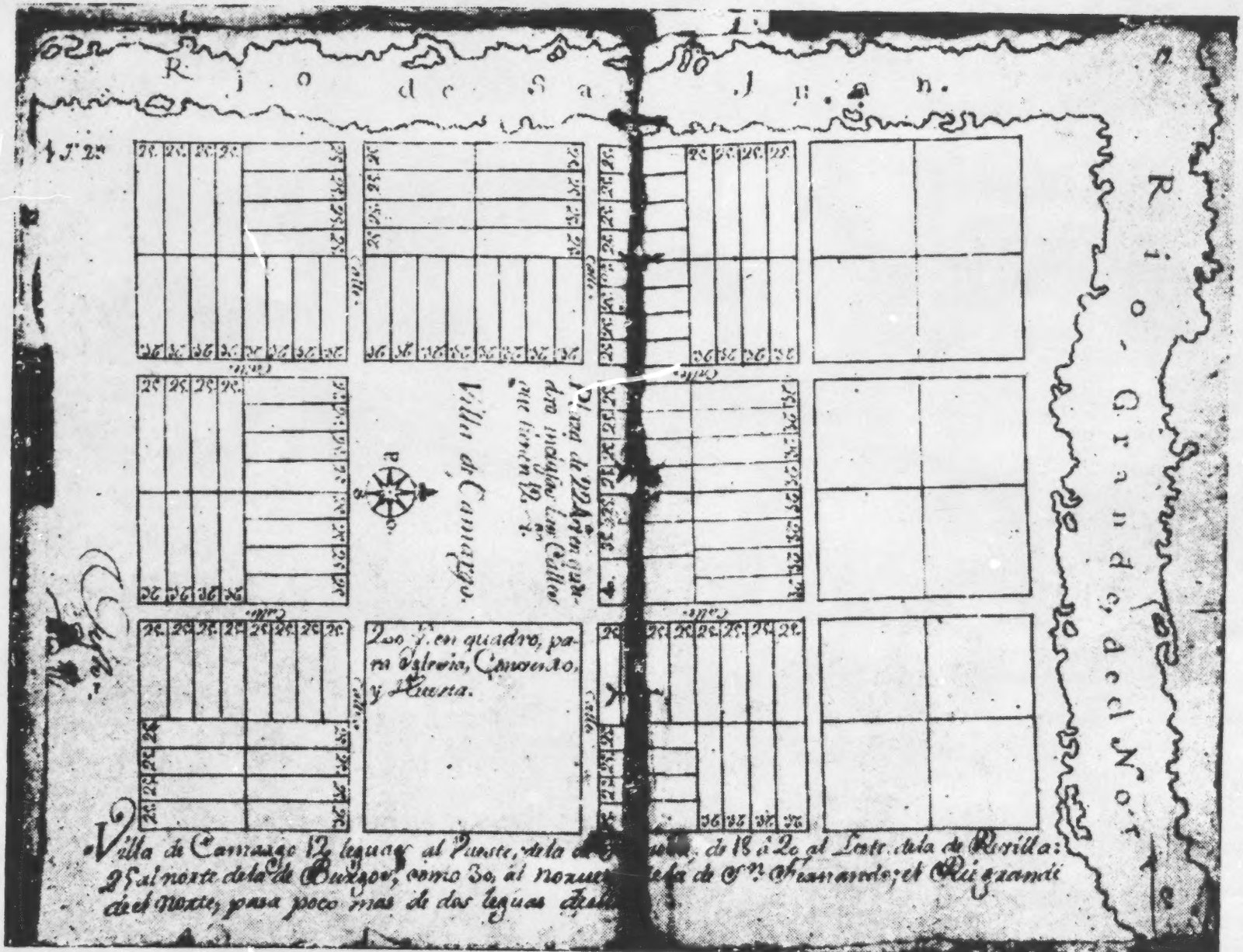
The colonists were immediately supplied with oxen and farm implements. Escandón encouraged the construction of irrigation ditches to insure successful crops. The founding of Santa María de Llera did not prove easy since it had to face Indian attacks. Nevertheless the development of irrigation assured a brighter future.

After the founding of the first villa, the Escandón party on January 1, 1749, moved north and founded San Fernando de Güemes at the headwaters of Santa Engracia River. The site of the settlement is a little north of present day Ciudad Victoria. The governor allotted forty families and six soldiers for the settlement. Captain Felipe Téllez Girón was in charge of the settlement.

From here the colonizing party moved eight to ten leagues to the northeast and established San Antonio de Padilla. The villa started with thirty families and shortly thereafter another ten families arrived. It was under the command of Captain Gregorio de la Paz who had eleven soldiers.

From Padilla Escandón continued his march

5 Herbert Eugene Bolton, *Texas in the Middle Eighteenth Century* (Austin and London: University of Texas Press, 1970), p. 294.


R i o d e S a n J u a n.
R i o G r a n d e d e l N o r t e
Villa de Camargo.
Plaza de 224 Varas en quadro.
Sitio para Cuartel.
Sitio para Parroquia.
Sitio para Casas Consistoriales.
Sitio para Alcabala.
Sitio para Carnicerias.
Sitio para Plaza de Toros.
Sitio para Alameda.
Sitio para Panteon.
Sitio para Hospital.
Sitio para Escuela de primeras letras.
Sitio para Casa de Correos.
Sitio para Casa de Diputacion.
Sitio para Casa de Ayuntamiento.
Sitio para Casa de Administracion de Rentas.
Sitio para Casa de Administracion de Alcabalas.
Sitio para Casa de Administracion de Tabacos.
Sitio para Casa de Administracion de Correos.
Sitio para Casa de Administracion de Diputacion.
Sitio para Casa de Administracion

northeastward on January 9 to the place called Cerrito de Ayre. Here he met Captain Antonio Ladrón de Guevara, who had come from the neighboring province of Nuevo León with settlers to join the colonizing venture. The re-enforcements of Captain Guevara were most opportune since the settlers faced hostile Indians in the area. On February 17 Santander was founded which today is called Jiménez. The number of settlers consisted of sixty families and a dozen soldiers under the command of Captain Guevara.

After the founding of Santander, Escandón dispatched Captain José Antonio Leal northward with thirty colonists and eight soldiers to found a settlement between Linares and the coast, named Burgos.

On February 21 the governor pushed northward to Salinas de la Barra. Here he encountered another colonizing group from Nuevo León under the command of Captain Nicolás Merino. The Merino group consisted of some thirty families and a squadron of soldiers. Captain Merino was not present when Escandón arrived since he had returned to Nuevo León to secure additional settlers and supplies. The governor therefore delayed the official ceremonies for the founding of the villa until he returned from founding a settlement on the Rio Grande.

It was near the end of February when Escandón left Salinas de la Barra in a northwesterly direction to the plains of Las Flores where the San Juan River enters the Rio Grande. Here he found a third group of colonizers from Nuevo León. These forty families and a few soldiers were under the command of Blas María de la Garza Falcón. The site selected by Captain de la Garza Falcón was located near an easy crossing point on the Rio Grande. Since the settlement was well on its way by the time the governor arrived, he immediately carried out the official founding ceremony on March 5, calling it Nuestra Señora de Santa Ana de Camargo. An eyewitness account described the ceremony as follows:

> At the sounding of the drum all of the soldiers and settlers with their arms gathered in the open plaza in front of the rude arbor erected to serve as a place for worship. Here, the captain of the villa, standing at the door, the church was blessed. Colonel Escandón then addressed the captain, administering to him the oath to defend the villa and comfort and encourage the settlers. He ended by saying that in all things ecclesiastical the villa was to be in charge of the College of Zacatecas. Mass was then sung and later the *alabado* [hymn of praise]. Then the soldiers and settlers, having discharged a volley in honor of the occasion, went to their *jacales* [houses], leaving the captains and leaders to conclude the ceremony. A bottle of wine was brought out and served in silver goblets to the captains and jefes, who drank to the health of their great leader and gave him thanks. 6

6 Cited in Florence Johnson Scott, *Historical Heritage of the Lower Rio Grande* (Waco, Texas: Texian Press, 1966),p. 28.

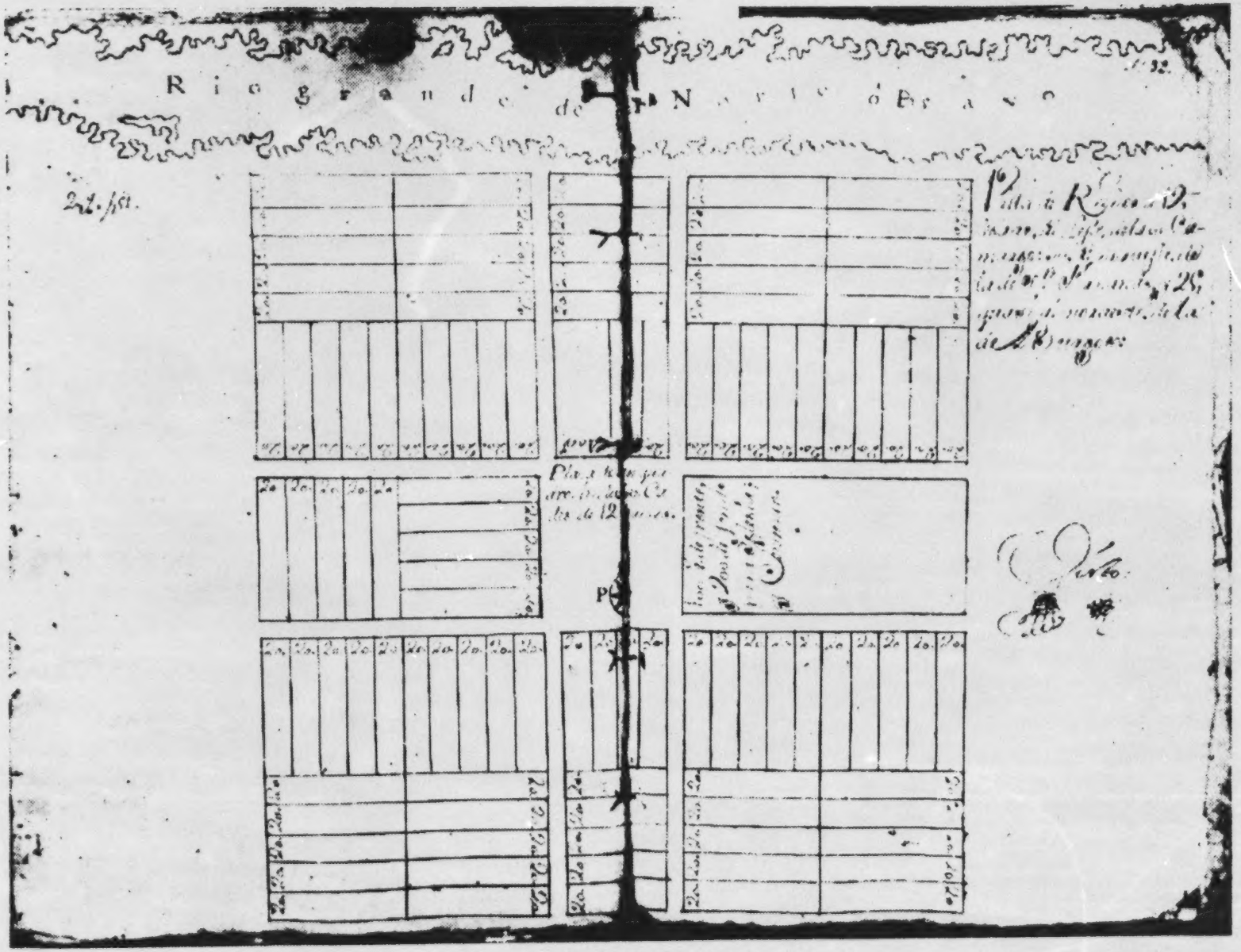
It was very evident to Escandón that the Nuevo León group had made a very auspicious beginning in the settlement of Camargo. In accordance with the directives of the governor each settler had been given one hundred to two hundred pesos to make the move to the new settlement. The cash bonus and free land offers, which were tax exempt for ten years, proved to be effective means for Captain de la Garza Falcón's recruitment efforts. Among the forty families starting the Camargo settlement were Miguel, the brother of the captain, and Nicolás de los Santos Coy, his brother-in-law and former alcalde of Cerralvo. These ranch families were hearty frontier people and therefore well prepared for the undertaking. They brought their cattle, horses, goats and sheep. The fact that they brought with them 13,000 head of sheep indicates that these frontiersmen were not small time ranchers.

Besides developing ranching the first settlers also started digging irrigation ditches. At the same time canoes were constructed to carry salt on the Rio Grande from the salt deposits near the mouth of the Rio Grande and northeast of present day Edinburg, Texas. To protect themselves from potential Indian attacks, a garrison was immediately built. Finally the settlers constructed a temporary church structure. All of these projects had either been started or completed by the time Escandón arrived to proclaim the official founding of the villa. Padre Simón Hierro, who accompanied Escandón, described the progress of the settlement at the time of the official founding of Camargo:

> There is a small wood, mostly brush, near the town. The river [San Juan] is well above the town and has deep pools in which the water stands without running. The town has its boat to cross the Rio Grande, where there are many small palm trees, very useful in thatching the houses. This settlement has already built all the houses for its settlers . . . Only a [permanent] church is missing. The Padres were in two small huts, outside the settlement, the distance of two gunshots away in the direction of the river [San Juan]. There they had built an arbor for the celebration of Mass. Father Fray Agustín received us here, dressed in his religious habit. After staying with him a while, we went on to the house of Captain Blas María, who has a very good home, although it is built of straw. The roof is high and it is very comfortable as compared with the others. 7

Before Escandón departed, he ordered the settlers to build a house for the priests. He also received assurances that a mission would be built for the Indians. He named the mission San Agustín de Laredo and placed it under the charge of Fray Marquis, who also was designated as president of all the missions in Nuevo Santander under the control of the Franciscan missionaries from the College of Guadalupe de Zacatecas. The location of the mission

7 Cited in Castañeda, pp. 156-157.



PLAN FOR THE VILLA OF REYNOSA

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was on the south bank of the Rio Grande not far from the villa.

The rapid growth of Camargo caused the inhabitants in 1753 to request Escandón for additional land grants across the Rio Grande. He offered the settlers a grant of ten leagues square but advised that fifteen new families be brought in so as not to depopulate Camargo. The settlement on the north bank of the river was called Carnestolendas which later became the site of Rio Grande City.

Near Carnestolendas a mission of some two hundred fifty Indians was started. The Indians proved themselves very adept at carpentry, stone masonry and soap making. According to Carlos Castañeda, a Texas historian, this was the first recorded evidence of soap manufacturing in Texas. In addition to these trades, the Indians raised corn, beans, pumpkins, watermelons and cabbage. The native people also engaged in salt traffic, which proved to be very profitable. In fact all of these industries aided the padres in paying off the mission debts within a very short time.

With the Camargo settlement well under way, Escandón planned the founding of another villa, approximately twelve leagues east of Camargo. The site was on the south bank of the Rio Grande and named Reynosa. The area possessed ample agricultural, grazing and timber land.

Prior to Escandón's arrival at the site, Captain Carlos Cantú with forty families and eleven soldiers from Nuevo León had begun settling the area. The captain was not only an experienced frontiersman but a man who spoke some of the local Indian languages. Thus within a few days he was able to settle more than one hundred Indian families and instruct them in the planting of crops.

Near the villa a site for the mission, San Joaquín del Monte, was selected. The Franciscans from Zacatecas took charge of the mission, but in the beginning the padres from Camargo had to minister to the spiritual needs of Reynosa and its mission until more missionaries arrived. Again the work of settlement done by Captain Cantú and his settlers was well underway when Escandón arrived. For this reason the official founding of the villa was proclaimed on March 14, nine days after the founding of Camargo.

With the arrival of the governor came needed mules, oxen, corn and clothing supplies. As in the case of Camargo, Escandón later granted additional lands to the settlers north of the river. These grants were five leagues square and extended to the present day area of McAllen and Pharr. Ranching and salt trade in the area became very prosperous.

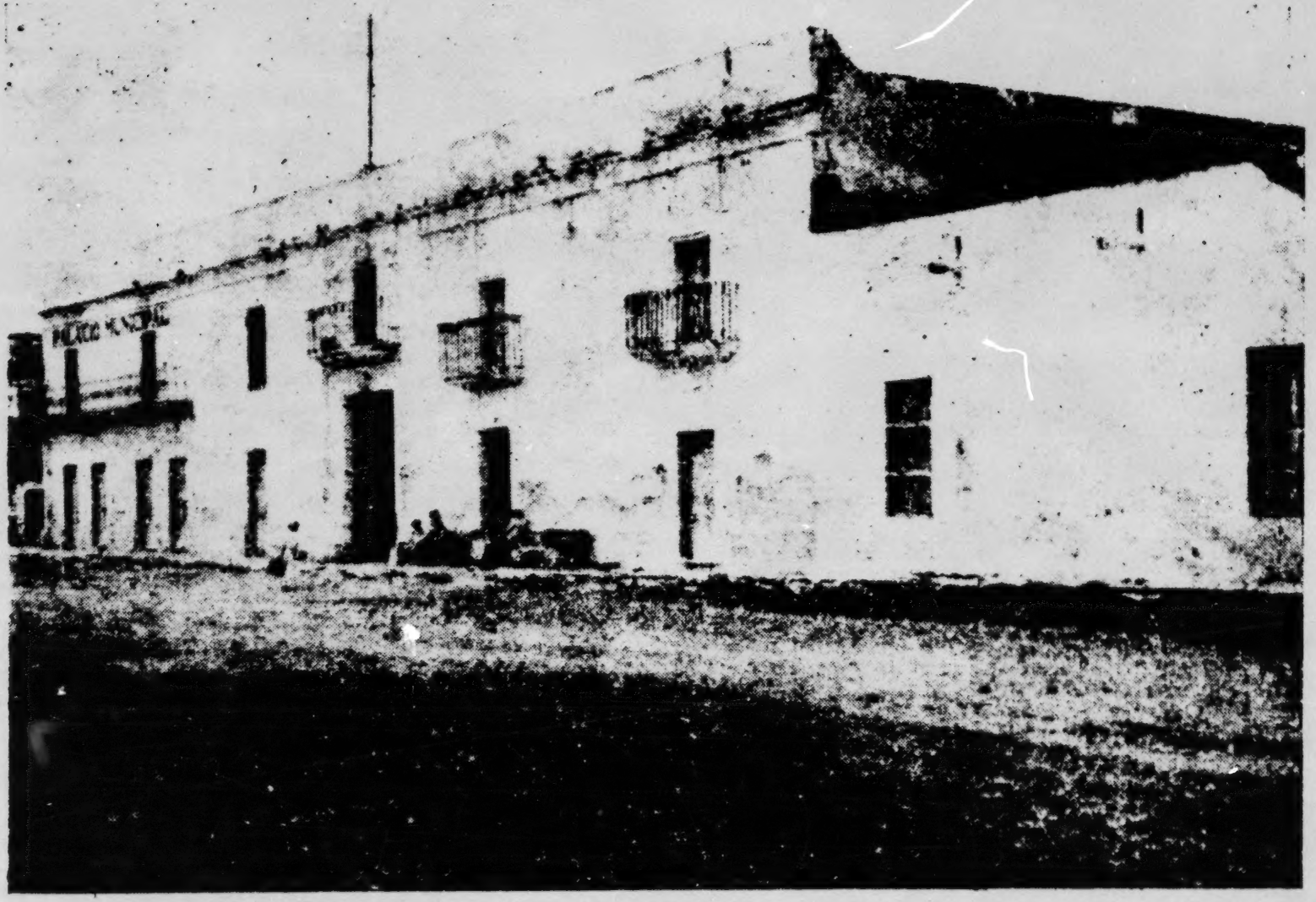
After the founding of Reynosa, it was the governor's intention to move northward and found two villas: one on the lower Nueces River, the northern boundary of his province, and the other near Bahía de Espíritu Santo on the lower San Antonio River. The Nueces River settlement was planned near the present site of Corpus Christi and was to have the name of Vedoya. Captain Pedro González de Paredes from Nuevo León was in charge of the venture, which ended in failure due to difficulties in recruiting settlers, inadequate food supply, an epidemic among the horses and unfavorable settlement conditions near the mouth of the river.

The second point of settlement, namely Bahía de Espíritu Santo, called for the removal of the mission and presidio on the Guadalupe River to the lower San Antonio River. Near the new mission and presidio, Escandón desired to establish the villa of Balmaceda. While the presidio consisting of twenty-seven soldiers and the mission were eventually moved to the new location, the founding of Balmaceda never materialized. By the middle of March, the governor realized that his attempts at founding two settlements on the northern boundary had progressed as far as possible. It was time to retrace his steps southward to continue the work of colonization.

Shortly after March 11, 1749, Escandón started his return trip, arriving at Salinas de la Barra on March 16. Here he found Captain Merino busily occupied in founding San Fernando. The initial settlement of forty families and eleven soldiers was quickly augmented by the arrival of another thirty families. A nearby mission, christened Cabezón de la Sal, was starting with six Indian families. The official ceremony for the founding of the villa took place on March 19.

By the last week in March, the governor was back in Santander. He was well pleased with the construction of buildings and irrigation ditches that were progressing under the supervision of Captain Guevara. The settlement was well protected from Indian attacks, thanks to the efficient flying squadron of the captain. Escandon took some time to explore the mouth of the Soto la Marina River in search of salt deposits and harbor prospects. The port prospects did not appear promising since a sandbar blocked the entrance to the estuary.

On April 5 Governor Escandón continued his southwesterly trip, briefly visiting Padilla, Güemes and Llera. From here he moved to the southern part of his province to found more towns. The intent was to establish a series of villas stretching across the entire southern frontier. Colonists from the Tampico area had already started villas while the governor was founding settlements in the northern regions of the province. Thus when Escandón arrived on the scene at the end of April, his main function was to proclaim the official founding of the towns. On May 1 the governor performed the traditional founding ceremony of Altamira, near present day Tampico. A nearby



HOUSE OF JOSE DE ESCANDON IN VILLA DE SANTANDER

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mission site called Suanzés was laid out and the administration of the mission was given to missionaries from Tampico.

On May 3 Escandón moved west from Altamira to Horcasitas. Here he found fifty families and several families of Olives and Huastec Indians. The area was well suited for agriculture and ranching. Nearby the mission of Puente de Arze under the charge of a padre from Tampico had begun its Christianizing work. The governor performed the official founding on May 9.

The next step in the governor's colonization itinerary was Santa Bárbara, a little to the southwest of Llera. The settlement had been started several years earlier and consisted of thirty-four families. The abundance of timber, good lands for seeding and excellent grazing lands assured the success of the settlement. All was ready for the official founding ceremony which the governor performed on May 19. The settlers were placed under the charge of Captain Juan Antonio de Berverena. A little north of the villa the mission of Ygollo was started.

After the brief stay at Santa Bárbara, the governor left for Tula, where he made preparations for the final settlement in the year 1749. He directed Captain Nicolás de Salazar to found Real de los Infantes, twelve to fourteen leagues north of Tula. Salazar was accompanied in this venture by several families from Nuevo León. Escandón also ordered José Ambrosio de Avila to explore the silver mining prospects in the area. In addition the location promised good pasture and agricultural lands. Salazar completed his colonization mission with the official founding of the villa on May 29.

Escandón did not accompany the Salazar group but remained in Tula where he cooperated in putting down Indian rebellions after which he disbanded his army. In June he returned to Querétaro, where he drafted his report on the first phase of the colonization.

The governor by the spring of 1749 had founded thirteen of his originally planned fourteen villas. Among the thirteen settlements he included the La Bahía de Espíritu Santo presidio and mission. Altogether the thirteen settlements numbered more than eight hundred families. The total military force to protect the settlers consisted of ten captains, two lieutenants, ten sergeants, two cadets, one hundred two soldiers and one drummer. There also was a flying squadron of eighty soldiers under the command of a lieutenant to protect the roads.

Escandón reported that the total cost for the settlement of thirteen villas amounted to 90,000 pesos. This figure included military and mission expenses. The success of the colonization project showed that the money was well spent but the governor of Nuevo Santander realized that the project was not finished. To fulfill his original proposal he had to make at least one more settlement.

The 1749 report showed a departure from his original plan of founding fourteen villas. He suggested to his superiors in Mexico City that additional settlements should be established to secure communication routes. With this recommendation in mind he planned an inspection tour of the settlements already founded in order to recommend sites for the additional towns.

The inspection tour began in spring of 1750. Escandón visited the villas in the Sierra Gorda area and then passed to the central area of his domain. Here he visited Burgos, which he had not inspected when it was founded in the preceding year. From here he proceeded to San Fernando and on to the two settlements on the Rio Grande. He was greatly impressed with the progress that had been made after only one year of settlement.

Although progress was greater than he anticipated, he did find a number of discouraging factors. At Burgos he noted the discontent of the settlers over Indian troubles in the area.

More discouraging was the arrival of the news, while he was visiting the Rio Grande settlements, that the Vedoya colony, which was to settle at the mouth of the Nueces River did not materialize. It will be recalled that he had ordered the settlement in 1749 when he was founding Camargo and Reynosa. The venture failed because of an inadequate food supply and an unsuitable location for colonization. In the meanwhile the Vedoya colonists had returned to the Rio Grande settlements to await further instructions from the governor. The number of settlers had dropped drastically due to deaths and the return of some of the settlers to their homes in Nuevo León. Escandón decided that the remaining settlers could be utilized in founding another settlement. He immediately appointed a new commander for the group, namely Captain Pedro José de Plaza, to replace Captain González who had died. At the same time additional colonists were recruited, bringing the total number to fifty families and eleven soldiers. After inspecting several sites near Santander, Escandón agreed to having the group establish the colony of Soto la Marina on September 3, 1750. The governor favored the site since it had a commanding view of the port and was well situated to control the Indians in the area. Not far distant from the site were ample grazing lands. He felt that the location held much promise for developing a fish and salt trade. In order to develop the latter commercial venture Escandón recruited fishermen from Altamira and Tampico to teach the Nuevo León ranchers the art of fishing. In the long run the salt and fish industry proved highly prosperous.

Along with the establishment of Soto la Marina, the nearby mission of El Infiesto was started. It was under the charge of Fray Buenaventura, a Franciscan missionary from the College of Zacatecas.

After the founding of Soto la Marina, Escandón immediately directed his attention to the west. It was a mountainous area and afforded a convenient refuge for Indians who waged raids on the settlements. Even prior to the colonization of Nuevo Santander, the Janambres had been a terror to the inhabitants of Jaumave as well as other settlers who ventured into this area. The governor realized that the Janambres must be controlled in order to secure the communication routes from Güemes, Llera and Jaumave to Nuevo León and protect the silver mines in the district. His first step was to have a number of his subjects venture into the area and start ranching. These hearty ranchers played the role of a rural police force, protecting the area from the Janambres.

At the same time the governor continued his efforts to attract settlers for the area. His efforts successfully culminated in the recruitment of twenty-four hearty frontier families under the command of Juan Astigárraga. With this company of settlers, Escandón on October 3, 1750, officially founded Santa María de Aguayo, the future Ciudad Victoria, between the San Marcos and Caballero rivers. Below the villa there was irrigable land well suited for crops. The mountain slopes provided abundant pasture lands.

Aguayo had its mission called Tres Palacios under the charge of Fray Antonio de Aréchiga. Within five years, one hundred thirty-four Indians had congregated in the mission and proved themselves very adept at farming.

Escandón was convinced that Aguayo by itself was not sufficient to contain the Janambres. Therefore he recommended founding another town between Horcasitas and Llera on the Guayalejo River. The initial efforts at founding a villa in March of 1751 did not prove successful because of continued Indian attacks. In fact, the settlement site was abandoned and the settlers in November temporarily returned to the safety of nearby Santa Bárbara. The governor renewed his efforts at settlement by recruiting thirty families under the command of Captain Antonio de Puga. This group was joined shortly thereafter by another twenty-eight families under the command of Captain Berverena. Thus on December 18, 1754, three years after the first attempt, the governor officially founded Escandón. Continued native hostility caused the settlement to grow very slowly. Even the nearby mission of Rumoroso under the supervision of Fray Francisco Xavier de Salazar was not able to attract Indian settlers for some time.

After the initial settlement of Escandón, the Nuevo Santander governor, directed his attention to establishing a villa nine leagues northwest of Güemes. The location had excellent pasture and irrigable lands and was strategically located to control the nearby hostile Indians. The settlement, christened Santo Domingo de Hoyos, dated its official founding May 19, 1752. The original founding families numbered a little above fifty and were under the command of Captain Domingo de Unzaga Ibarra. The settlers developed a flourishing ranching enterprise with sheep and cattle numbering in the thousands. Six leagues to the north of Santo Domingo de Hoyos silver mines were worked. The influx of miners soon numbered thirty to forty families and set the stage for the beginning of Real de Borbón.

Captain Unzaga developed a very efficient military force to stem the Indian attacks on his settlers. To further the pacification of the Indians, a mission started near Santo Domingo de Hoyos. It was under the care of Fray Fernando Ruiz y Junco, but had little success in converting Indians.

Approximately five months after the founding of Hoyos, Escandón moved to the area between Santander and Soto la Marina. Between the two villas there was a trade route where meats and skins from Aguayo, Padilla, Güemes and other towns were transported to coastal markets in exchange for salt, fish and tools. Fear of Indian attacks prompted the governor to found a settlement between Santander and Soto la Marina. Tomás Condé, who had accompanied the governor on many of the colonizing ventures, quickly volunteered his services. The governor granted him the title of captain and placed seventeen families under his charge. The site, officially named Santillana on October 26, 1752 was not well suited for irrigation.Its prosperity remained dependent on the trade route.

While Escandón was pushing settlements in the southern half of his province, new towns were springing up on the banks of the Rio Grande above Camargo. The initial colonization efforts here started with Nuevo León and Coahuila ranchers, who had staked out their claims prior to Escandón's colonization of Nuevo Santander. One such rancher was Nicolás de la Garza from Monterrey, who started a ranch in 1745 some twenty leagues above Camargo. He was joined a short time later by Antonio Taberes and Vicente Guerra, a rancher from Coahuila. The governor claimed the area these ranchers settled as part of his jurisdiction, and feared that if he did not exert his rights to the area, the settlements might easily be incorporated into the province of Coahuila. These pioneer ranchers also realized that if they were incorporated into the province of Nuevo Santander, they would benefit from a ten year tax exemption. On July 15, 1750, Miguel Martínez contacted the governor, who at that time was in Reynosa, and requested permission for settling fourteen families

twenty leagues above Camargo, near the junction of the Salado River and the Rio Grande. About three months later the governor received a similar request from Guerra to settle fifty families. The latter desired the title of captain and reported that twenty-six families had already moved into the area. On October 10, the governor approved Guerra's request and assigned him 1,000 square varas for the settlement, named Revilla.

A league north of the villa there was founded the mission Ampuero, which failed to attract Indians for several years. The missionary, Fray Miguel de Santa María, spent much of his time ministering to the Indians living on the north bank of the Rio Grande.

The Revilla settlement quickly prospered. By 1753 the reports show that forty-three families owned 2,500 horses and more than 25,000 sheep and goats. Two years later the number of families had increased seventy percent.

While Revilla was growing by leaps and bounds, another Coahuilan rancher by the name of José Vásquez Borrego started a ranch settlement ten leagues to the northwest, a few miles north of present day San Ignacio, Texas. Like Guerra, Borrego desired that his settlement of thirteen families should become part of Escandón's jurisdiction and thereby benefit from the ten year tax exemption. On August 22, 1750, the Nuevo Santander governor granted approval for the settlement. The grant consisted of fifty *sitios* and took the name of Nuestra Señora de los Dolores. The grant obligated Borrego to treat the Indians kindly, convert them to Christianity and not to declare war on them unless in self-defense. Other duties required the captain to construct, at his own expense, two ferry boats for the carrying of travelers across the Rio Grande enroute to San Antonio de Béjar and Goliad. No charges were allowed for such crossings. Finally the captain was not permitted to sell the grant of land and was instructed to give back any lands to the government in case the crown needed sites for the construction of new towns on the grant.

Captain Borrego immediately pushed the settlement of Dolores by recruiting thirty more familes from his Coahuilan ranch. He placed his nephew Bartolomé Borrego in charge of the first settlement. In 1753 the captain met Escandón who then was visiting Dolores. The meeting resulted in an increase of the original Borrego grant. The captain assigned a grant of land to his grandson, José Fernando Vidaurri, who was the son-in-law of Tomás Sánchez, the future founder of Laredo. Another ranch, at the present day location of San Ignacio, Texas, was granted to the captain's son, José Fernando Borrego. Much of the credit for developing a prosperous ranching enterprise in the area must go to the Borrego family.

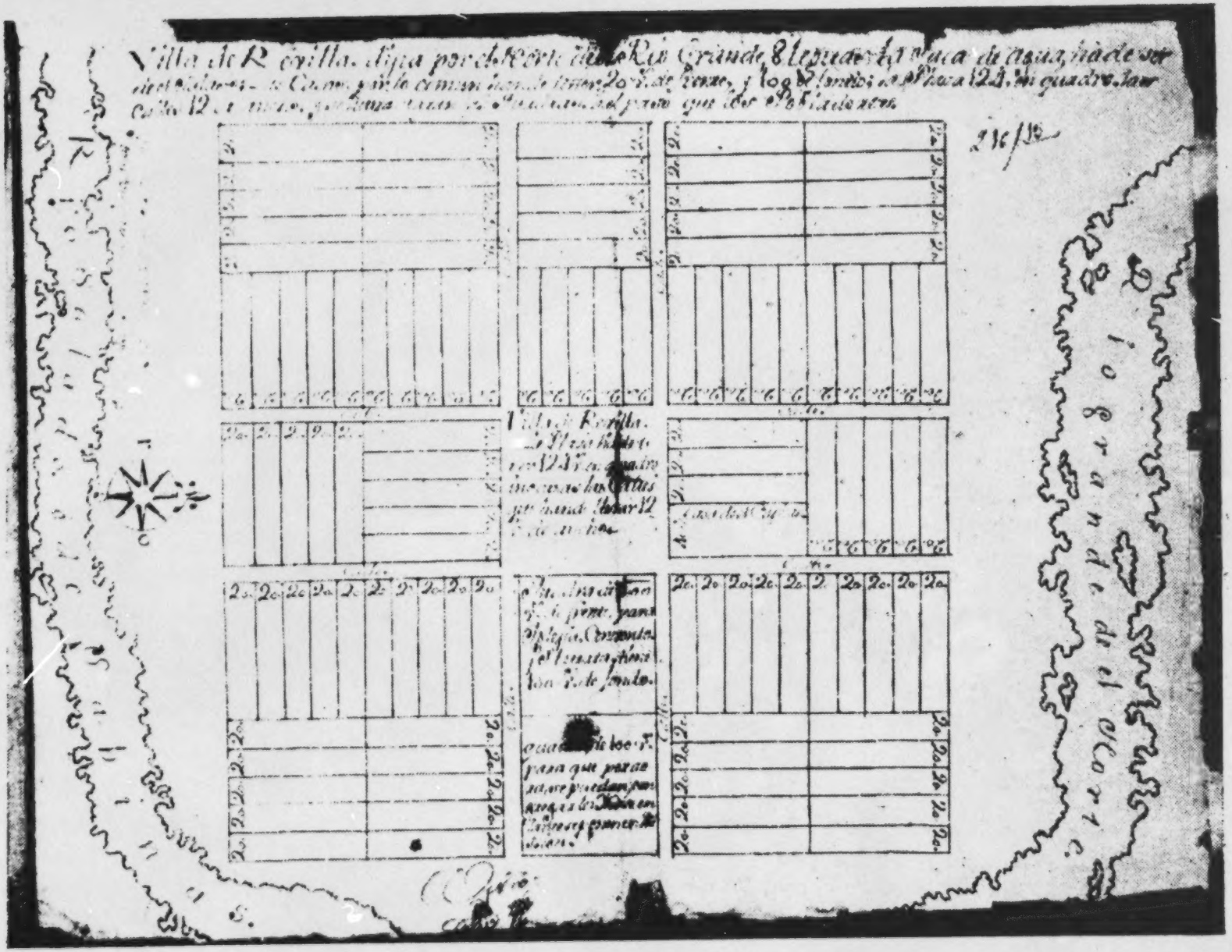
The Borrego land grant never had a mission. The settlers remained dependent for their spiritual needs on the services of Fray Miguel de Santa María, who was stationed at Revilla.

Midway between Camargo and Revilla on the south bank of the Rio Grande another settlement was coming into existence. As early as 1734 José Felix de Almondoz established his ranch at El Paso del Cántaro, an excellent crossing point on the river and located at the present day site of Roma, Texas. During the following years more settlers, mostly from Cerralvo, arrived. The more prominent ranching families included such names as Prudencio Orobio y Bazterra, the former commander of La Bahia; Blas María de la Garza Falcón; José Florencio de Chapa and Manuel de Hinojosa. By 1752 the ranching community had nineteen families and was considered part of the Camargo settlement. On March 6, 1752, Escandón formally recognized the settlement as the *lugar* of Mier.

The site of Mier was on the banks of the Alamo River, which provided water for irrigation. At the same time it was near Paso del Cántaro, a crossing point for the salt trade on the Rio Grande. Escandón selected Captain José Florencio de Chapa to oversee the development of the settlement. The governor encouraged the captain to begin settlement across the Rio Grande. Within three years the settlement had grown to twenty-seven families. The ranch holdings became very extensive, consisting of 2,700 horses, 38,000 sheep and more than 1,000 head of cattle. There was little farming.

As was the case with the Borrego settlement, the Mier families did not have a resident missionary, but had to depend on the Revilla missionary for their spiritual needs. This was not rectified until 1763 when the first resident pastor arrived. Without a missionary the work of Christianizing the Indians remained unattended. A few Indian families did join the settlement and helped in the construction of homes and clearing of the land.

While Escandón was visiting Revilla in 1754, he received word of another settlement starting on the north bank of the Rio Grande. This was the work of Tomás Sánchez de la Barrera y Gallardo from Coahuila who was developing a ranch in the present day area of Laredo, Texas. Escandón's first reaction to the Sánchez settlement was to persuade the rancher to move further north and place a colony on the Nueces River. Sánchez made the expedition to the Nueces but informed the governor that he found no place suitable for settlement. The report of Sánchez was confirmed by Captain Borrego who advised the Nuevo Santander governor to honor Sánchez's request of founding a settlement on the north bank of the Rio Grande, some



PLAN FOR THE VILLA OF REVILLA

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ten leagues above Dolores. The selected site had the additional advantage of being located near Paso de Jacinto, a convenient crossing point on the river.

In his request for settlement Sánchez promised to underwrite the expenses for moving families to the site. Escandón agreed and suggested that the villa be named San Agustín de Laredo in honor of a town on the Bay of Biscay in the Spanish province of Santander. The governor appropriated fifteen leagues of land to the settlers and conferred the title of captain on Sánchez. The official founding took place on May 15, 1755, when the captain conducted his family along with three or four other families to the spot and started the construction of adobe huts. The place was an elevated sector of land overlooking the river and was near the present day Laredo plaza. Later more colonists arrived, all at the expense of Captain Sánchez.

The terrain was semiarid and not well suited for irrigation. Limited dry farming was done but the most successful industry was ranching. Sheep and cattle grazed over the vast stretches of ranch land and multiplied quickly.

The Laredo settlement did not have a resident missionary. Like Dolores the settlers became dependent on the missionary from Revilla for their spiritual needs.

After the founding of Laredo, Escandón planned two more settlements. One such settlement was Real de Borbón, which started in 1755 with forty families from Hoyos and Burgos under Captain Unzaga. Its location was in the Cerro de Santiago area, which proved suitable for the development of mining, agriculture and ranching. Another one was Palmillas which had started with six families in 1745. Ten years later the families numbered fifty-three and had a nearby mission, named Divisadero. The town prospered due to good grazing and agricultural lands and friendly Indians. The governor officially recognized it as a villa in 1755 and placed Francisco Gaona in charge of the settlement.

Mention needs to be made of Jaumave which served as the departure point for Escandón's entrada into the Seno Mexicano in 1747. As early as the beginning of the eighteenth century there were settlers here, but the hostile Pisones drove out these pioneers. Subsequently further efforts were made to reestablish the settlement. By 1743 there were seven or eight families engaged in stock raising. Near Jaumave was the mission of San Juan Bautista. Even though the Jaumave settlement was within the boundary of the province of Nuevo Santander, Escandón had not officially proclaimed it a villa by 1755.

Having completed the inspection of both established villas and new ones, Escandón in the fall of 1755 decided to draft a report on the status of his province for the Viceroy Francisco de Güemes y Horcasitas. Thus on October 2 the governor entrusted the reins of the provincial government into the hands of his close associate and friend Berverena, who served as interim governor for four months. The governor retired to Querétaro and completed the report on October 13.

The account described the many hardships that the pioneering settlers had to undergo during the first years of settlement. Escandón spoke of a long drought and a shortage of food that caused the settlers to become dependent on the older towns along the provincial borders. The lack of food also made it more difficult to pacify the Indians.

The drought terminated in 1751 with downpours that demolished homes, irrigation lands and crops. Especially hard hit by floods were Güemes, Santander, San Fernando, Burgos and Camargo, which had to be relocated on higher sites. Next came malaria that took the lives of many Indians and several Spaniards.

But there also was good news. The governor noted that many of the older settlements had become self-sufficient in producing food. He noted ample production of maize, pumpkins and beans. These were supplemented by fish, several varieties of game and an ever increasing herd of cattle and sheep.

Escandón reported on his effort to establish a port near Soto la Marina but a sandbar made the place unsuitable for the entry of large crafts. Thus he was forced to utilize smaller crafts to bring in farm implements and other supplies and to export salt, meat and hides. This limited trade aided the commercial life of Soto la Marina and the interior villas such as Santillana and Santander.

The report contained a map indicating the sites of the settlements and a chart which listed the number of towns founded and the number of settlers. According to the chart the governor had established twenty-three settlements between December 25, 1748, and October 12, 1755, which he classified as follows: one city, seventeen villas, two *poblaciones*, one *lugar* and two *reales de minas*, or mining camps. Jaumave was excluded from the list since it still had not received the official designation of villa. The total population as of 1755 was listed as 1,481 families or 6,383 persons. Included in this total were forty-four families of officials and soldiers. In addition there were 2,837 Indians in the missions.

The governor was convinced that for all practical purposes the colonization of Nuevo Santander was complete. He still regarded certain rebellious Indians as a problem and therefore it was necessary to retain a military force for a short time to protect the settlers. After a few years, he felt that the settlers could protect themselves and the soldiers he dismissed. After this, the only expense to the crown would be the

support of the missionaries.

The governor reminded the viceroy that all land grants were common lands. He explained that during the early stages of colonization the granting of common lands had advantages over offering settlers individual land grants, despite the fact that many settlers were calling for the break up of the common lands into individual holdings. The report offers three reasons for the governor's action:

> I was advised to make the said individual [distributions] of land but I have not done it for three reasons; first, for as good as the place is for habitation, there is not room for all and because of this there will be disputes over the preferred places; second, that from time to time better and more useful settlers are coming into the communities than those who comprised the first settlers and it has seemed best for me to assign them that which they can enjoy in common, irrigation, pastures, fields, all of this would not take place in a harmonious way if the best sites had fallen as they were supposed ... to half a dozen settlers; third, there has not been sufficient time at the exact moment to dispose of this and other happenings as they occurred and it was not possible for me to engage in this difficult business; furthermore, there is not in all of these surroundings an intelligent person to whom I could confide and particularly so, since a person of high integrity is needed to execute justice and leave all who are interested contented, so that each one will get his preference. 8

In addition to the land grants, Escandón assigned lands to the missions. These he claimed were ample for their success.

One can only marvel at the achievements of the governor, especially when it is realized the work was accomplished within nine years. Added to this realization is the fact that one-half of the expense for the venture was borne by him. Escandón had achieved what other Spanish colonizers had failed to do in the Seno Mexicano for two centuries. Equally important is the fact that the colonization of the Seno Mexicano had secured the area against foreign threats. But the story does not end here. The subsequent development of the Nuevo Santander settlements adds further testimony to a job well done.

THE JOSE TIENDA DE CUERVO REPORT

Up to now our story has focused on the colonization work of José de Escandón. In telling these events the administrative qualities of Escandón have not received the merited attention. Therefore a brief resume of his conduct as governor is in order, which will be followed by the Cuervo Report, treating the status of the province of Nuevo Santander in the year 1757.

Historians are frequently impressed with the Bourbon kings of Spain regarding their reforms to revive the Spanish empire in the eighteenth century and their appointment of competent administrators to achieve this goal. The selection of Escandón to colonize the Seno Mexicano fitted in well with the Bourbon ideal of developing a more efficiently governed empire and an empire that was economically productive.

It will be recalled that the viceroy Count Revillagigedo had appointed Escandón the governor of Nuevo Santander with complete authority and directly subject to the viceroy. The governor held this vast power for eighteen years. Besides the usual administrative duties such as seeing that royal decrees were carried out and the desired taxes collected, the governor handled all judicial questions, referring only those to the viceroy when he felt a judgement of final appeal was in order.

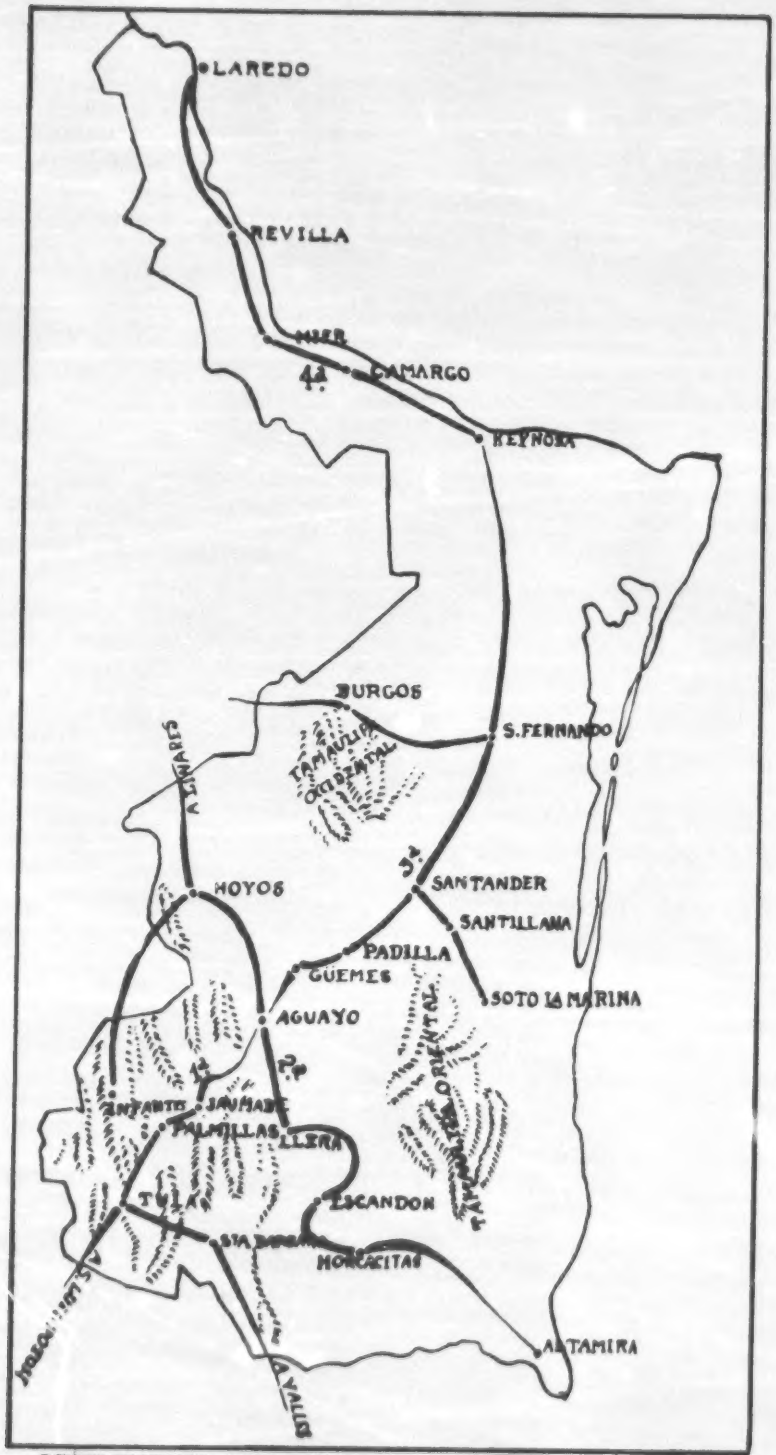
An important function of the governor was to protect his settlers against unruly Indians. The push for the establishment of missions was one means utilized in the pacification and Christianization of the native people. Escandón was not above using harsh measures against rebellious Indians. He did not hesitate to remove Indians from his province when he felt that his work was threatened despite the fact that royal orders insisted that Indians must not be removed from their habitat. These harsh measures were a means of last resort. The fact that the Indian casualty list increased after the governor terminated his rule indicates that he had achieved better relations with his Indian subjects than did the subsequent governors of the province.

Time and time again the governor proved to be an excellent judge of men and an excellent leader. This is very much in evidence in the appointment of captains to supervise the newly founded villas. He desired at all times to fill these administrative posts as well as judicial positions with men who could read and write. This was no easy task on the frontier where such basic skills were not plentiful.

To insure good government he prohibited gambling and alcoholic beverages. A frontier society that had few outlets for entertainment must have found it difficult to cope with these prohibitive measures. This was not the case with the immediate successor of Escandón who enriched himself by granting gambling and alcoholic licenses.

Perhaps in no other area can the good government of Escandón be better observed than in the furthering of economic prosperity of the province. From Reynosa to Laredo ranching proved highly successful. The villa of San Fernando took great pride in its ranching and the cultivation of corn and sugar cane. In the district of Horcasitas the settlers grew sugar cane, bananas, corn and other crops. Silver mines were being worked at Real de Borbón. Escandón had wisely selected each site to produce what was best suited to the area. Nuevo

8 Cited in Scott, p.45.



SETTLEMENTS AND ROUTES FOUNDED BY ESCANDON

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Santander was well on its way in developing a diversified economy.

Neither did the governor overlook the commercial life of his province. This is evidenced by his concern for the development of roads to connect the villas. One of the main transportation routes left Laredo to Reynosa and from here it passed south and southeast, connecting San Fernando, Santander, Padilla, Güemes, Aguayo, Jaumave, Palmillas and Tula. From Tula the route continued southeastward to San Luis Potosí. From this main artery there were branch routes to the Real de Borbón, Hoyos, Llera, Escandón, Horcasitas and Altamira. A look at a current map of the state of Tamaulipas shows that Escandón had planned his road system well since the routes are similar to the state's present highway system. The similarity even extends to the products carried on the roads.

When Escandón arrived in Mexico City in October of 1755 to deliver his report, he discovered that the Count of Revillagigedo had requested the king to be relieved of his viceregal duties. The crown immediately appointed Agustín de Ahumada y Vallalón, Marqués de las Amarillas, to take over the office on November 9. The timing was most opportune for the governor and he lost no time in using his lengthy report to acquaint the new viceroy with the status and needs of his province. One of his suggestions was the establishment of additional villas. The new viceroy desired more time to study the matter before he would commit himself. He called a junta in Mexico City to study the proposal. In March of 1757 the junta recommended that José Tienda de Cuervo, captain of the dragoons in Vera Cruz, be appointed inspector of the province of Nuevo Santander. To aid him in the inspection, the junta commissioned Agustín López de la Cámara Alta, an engineer and lieutenant in the army, to accompany Cuervo. The two appointees were to visit each settlement, collect statistics on existing conditions and make recommendations for the further development of the province. The instructions to the two men are very detailed and can best be summarized as follows:

> . . . the commisson was requested to ascertain information on the following: the names of the various settlements, their locations, the number of colonists in each, the number of Indians assembled, and the natives who had submitted to the sacrament of baptism; whence the settlers proceeded, the date of their arrival, the source of the cost of transportation, and the means of subsistence in their new homes; whether the Indians dwelt apart from the Spaniards, at what distances, and what means the natives had for subsistence; the names of the rivers and creeks in the vicinity, their origins, and their advantages for irrigation; what settlements had irrigation facilities in operation, the use made of such facilities, and the yield of the various crops planted on irrigable lands; the cost of settlement to the government, to Colonel Escandón, and to the colonists themselves; the number of officials and soldiers at the various settlements and the salary of each individual; the harbor conditions on the Bay of Santander, with particular reference to bars, depth of channel, winds, and possibilities of defense; what ores were to be found in the mineral regions, the locations of the mines, and the output; the names and locations of the sierras, together with the asylums which these afforded the unsettled bands; the effect of the recent establishments on older settlements and the recommendations for dominating the barbarous tribes.9

The commission's recommendation met the approval of the viceroy. The two commissioners left Mexico City on April 1, 1757, and arrived in Güemes on April 28, the first stopover on the itinerary. The inspection terminated four months later with the final visit to Real de los Infantes, a mining camp. Altogether the two officials had visited twenty-four settlements. Their report offers a very accurate account of the state of the province in 1757.

The report started with a description of Escandón's government, which was characterized as being both military and ecclesiastical. Under the governor were the captains of each villa who exercised political and military duties. Each captain delegated to a sergeant duties in carrying out local expeditions and daily routine functions. The missionaries were charged with converting the Indians and settling them in pueblos. Escandón had the final say-so in the hiring and firing of all local officials.

The commissioners found that the captains, soldiers and missionaries received salaries from the royal treasury. In addition there were other expenses borne by a subsidy from crown resources. The total expenditures amounted to 43,000 pesos per year. The inspectors considered these expenditures unwarranted and advised that they should be cut one-third by eliminating three captain positions and drastically reducing the salaries of the remaining captains.

The commissioners reported that a large number of Indians had accepted settled life by 1757 but they found an even larger number continuing their nomadic life and attacking nearby settlements. They noted that in the southern portion of the province below a line drawn from Real de Borbón to Soto la Marina, the settlers were exposed to hostile Indians, especially the Janambres. To lessen this threat the inspectors proposed additional pacification campaigns and the founding of three new settlements, strategically located to prevent Indians from seeking refuge in the mountains and to protect the roads connecting the

9 Lawrence Francis Hill, *José de Escandón and the Founding of Nuevo Santander* (Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 1926), pp. 106-107. For a translation of the twenty-four questions to be answered by the two inspectors see Scott, pp. 48-51.

coastal settlements with the interior villas. What the proposal really called for was the shifting of soldiers to points where there was the greatest Indian pressure and leaving other settlements who needed less protection responsible for their own defense.

Another task of the inspectors was to study the harbor conditions in the Bay of Santander. This was done when the two commissioners reached Soto la Marina in June of 1757. They listened to much testimony concerning the sandbar across the mouth of the Soto la Marina River, which impeded ships of even moderate size. After hearing the discouraging reports, the two officials made a personal investigation. They concluded that to develop adequate harbor facilities woud be too costly. Here Cuervo may also have been expressing a vested interest. Since he was a resident of Vera Cruz, the opening of another competing port on the gulf coast could mean less trade for his home city.

Regarding the mining industry the commissioners felt more explorations for mineral resources should be undertaken. If these explorations proved successful, then it would prove to be a boon for settlement and provide the royal treasury with additional income.

Of more importance to the two officials was the question of common land holding. These they recommended should be divided into individual land grants as had originally been promised to the settlers. The amount of land allotted to each settler should be based on merit and seniority and respect for the land rights of the Indians. Along with this general endorsement, the report counseled improvement of irrigation systems and the relocation of three villas to better locations. To these suggustions were added the extension of the ten year tax free franchise in some of the less progressive settlements and the founding of new missions. The commissioners thought that these extra expenses could be borne by the savings made in the reorganization of the military forces in the province.

Up to now we have treated some of the general aspects of the report. The questions put to the two commissioners called for very detailed information on each villa. Needless to say, limitations of space permit the selection of only some data from the report that will provide some evidence of the development of the province by 1757.

As noted previously, the first official stopover for the commissioners was at Güemes on April 28. Here they reported a population of four hundred persons. The original founders numbered some fifty families. Ranching was the main preoccupation, consisting of some 1,100 cattle, 2,700 horses and mules and 7,200 sheep. There was good fishing in the mountain streams and an adequate supply of timber.

The spiritual administration was in charge of Fray Francisco Xavier García. His labor among the Indians was not too fruitful, having baptized only two Indians.

A week later the commission traveled to Hoyos, which today is Hidalgo. The population was nearing the six hundred mark, including some Tlascalan Indian settlers. This amounted to almost a six percent increase over the original number of inhabitants. The settlers engaged in ranching, agriculture and traded wool, hide and salt.

Next the inspection party passed on to Real de Borbón or Villagrán as it is known today. Here they found more than five hundred inhabitants. Ranching and mining were the two main industries but there was some irrigated farming. The ranching industry included some 70,000 head of sheep. While the royal officials were visiting the villa, they performed the official founding ceremony on May 9, since it had not been done previously.

The next destination was Aguayo, a settlement of some four hundred persons, mainly farmers and ranchers. The main crops were sugar cane, beans and maize. Livestock, consisting of horses, cattle and sheep, was approaching the 7,000 mark. The nearby mission was under the charge of Fray Antonio Xavier de Aréchiga. His work among one hundred fifty Pisones showed promising results since he had baptized about one-third of them.

The commission moved on to Llera on May 16, which faced serious Indian threats. Fray Tomás Cortés in his work among the Indians experimented with giving them a considerable amount of local self rule, which helped in keeping harmonious relations with some of the Indians. The number of villa inhabitants was seventy-one families, a slight increase over the original number. The primary occupation was agriculture consisting of maize, sugar cane, beans and cotton. Ranching was supplementary. The livestock figures showed 1,400 horses, cattle and sheep.

When the commissioners next arrived at Escandón, present day Xicoténcatl, they noted little progress since its founding in 1754. The site suffered from a series of inundations and the location of the town was constantly changed. The commissioners counted three hundred ten persons and considered the area promising for ranching and mining.

The prospects of success were much brighter at Horcasitas, today Magiscatzín. The villa had three hundred sixty-three inhabitants and more than a thousand head of sheep and cattle. Even more important than its cattle industry was the settlement's production of maize, beans and sugar cane.

The commissioners were also impressed with the nearby mission of San Francisco Xavier Puente de Arze under the charge of Miguel de Jesús Rada.

Here were gathered the Olives, the Huastec and the Palagüeques, who numbered between two hundred to three hundred persons. These were able to sustain themselves with stock raising and farming.

At the end of May, 1757, the inspection party arrived at Altamira, a villa of some three hundred and fifty-six inhabitants, most of whom were Negroes, mulattoes and Huastec Indians. The settlers engaged in fish, beef, hide and salt industries, but due to an inadequate corn supply it was difficult to keep the Indians congregated at the nearby mission of Capistrano de Suanzés. The mission under the supervision of Fray Joaquín Manzano had some one hundred sixteen Anacanáes.

From Altamira the two officials traveled northwest to Padilla on June 8. They reported the settlement's population to be three hundred eighty persons. The inspectors were disappointed with the progress of the settlement, especially with the poorly constructed homes of the inhabitants. The causes for the backward conditions were given as poor crops and Indian attacks. Cuervo recommended government aid for the construction of an irrigation system. He felt its survival was essential since Padilla was strategically located as a base for stationing a flying squadron of soldiers to protect the heart of the province from Indian attacks.

The villa's lack of progress was further reflected in the mission Guarnizó under the charge of Fray Marquín Márques. The missionary had planted crops with the hope that this might attract Indians to settle in the mission and receive religious instruction. This hope remained unrealized at the time of the inspection. The town did have one bright spot in its economy. The settlers owned more than 10,000 head of sheep.

The next stop on the itinerary agenda was Santander, today Jiménez. Its population of one hundred fifty had increased by one hundred persons since the founding in 1749. The villa served as the capital of the province and home of the governor. The location had excellent potential for farming and providing building materials, but unfortunately its high humidity and swamps caused the spread of fever. Cuervo ordered the swamps to be drained.

Lying on the outskirts of the town were irrigated fields of maize, beans, sugar cane, cotton, peppers and vegetables. A short distance to the north was Escandón's hacienda, which had a small sugar cane mill.

The neigboring mission under the charge of Padre Buenaventura Ruiz de Esparza reported only about fifty baptized Indians. Cuervo accused the padre of spending too much time with the settlers and not enough among the Indians. The failure to learn the Indian tongue was given as the main drawback to doing successful missionary work.

Slightly to the southeast of Escandón was the village of Santillana, today Abasolo, under the command of Tomás Condé. It was a very small village counting no more than eighteen families, whose chief occupation was ranching.

By June 18 the inspection tour was ready to survey the settlement of Soto la Marina, consisting of two hundred twenty-one persons. According to the commissioner's report this was the most destitute of all the settlements visited. There was some stock raising but the land was ill suited for farming. More promising were the salt and fishing industries.

Conversion of nearby Indians appeared promising but this work remained unattended due to the death of the missionary. The missionary from Santander, Padre Luis Mariano Chacón, temporarily took care of the spiritual needs of the inhabitants.

The commissioners did enjoy a bright spot on their visit to Soto la Marina. Prior to their visit they had stopped off at one of Escandón's ranches which was near the settlement. The hacienda of San Juan, as the ranch was called, contained seventy square leagues of territory. It was operated by a staff of fifty-seven servants and shepherds and pastured five hundred forty-five horses, 1,800 cattle and 20,900 sheep. Here the *mayordomo* of the ranch entertained the official guests in a most elegant fashion.

After the visit at Soto la Marina the party turned north to visit the Rio Grande towns. On the way they stopped off at San Fernando on July 4, which was a ranching community of some three hundred ninety-three souls. The ranchers sold their cattle and salt supplies to settlers in the western settlements in exchange for maize. This developing trade appeared to hold much promise for the future.

At the neighboring mission of Cabezón de la Sal there were a hundred seventy-five Indians. Fray Buenaventura Rivera did successful work among the Indians in spite of the fact that he was deaf. Unfortunately Cuervo found the deafness of the priest hindering the missionary work and therefore recommended a replacement.

After the brief stay at San Fernando, the royal commissioners arrived in Reynosa on July 9 to begin their inspection tour of the Rio Grande settlements. At the time of the visit in 1757 Reynosa counted two hundred eighty-nine inhabitants. The settlement was mainly a ranching community with ranch holdings on both sides of the river. On the Texas side of the river the holdings extended to present day Pharr and McAllen. The extensive pasture lands grazed 3,000 horses, 13,000 sheep and goats and 1,200 head of cattle. Since the inhabitants did not have enough corn, cattle and salt were traded for this all important food supply. Cuervo urged that the irrigation ditches

be improved and expanded so that more farming could be done.

The royal commissioners found a number of aspects about the settlement which they felt needed improvement. They commented on the poor location of Reynosa, which exposed it to flooding as happened in 1751. The officials voiced displeasure over the fact that a few prominent families enjoyed most of the wealth, leaving a large number of settlers poor.

Neither was it all well with the two hundred and some Indians congregated in the mission of San Joaquín del Monte under the charge of Fray Agustín Fragoso. The Indians came from the surrounding tribes of the Nazas, Narices, Comecrudos and Tejones. These had proved themselves very loyal to the Spanish authorities but nursed grievances over Escandón's removal of Captain Cantú, whom they greatly respected and who could speak their language. This was not the case with the recent replacement, Captain Pedro de Estrada. Cuervo apparently decided not to interfere with the governor's power of appointment and so let the decision stand. He did recommend the replacement of the missionary with one more acceptable to the Indians.

Camargo was the next town to host the royal visitors. The town at the time of the visit was the largest and most prosperous of all the settlements in Nuevo Santander. Cuervo reported the number of inhabitants as six hundred thirty-seven. The prosperity of the community rested on ranching. Farming did not prove too successful because of drought conditions and difficulties in developing an irrigation system. Altogether there were seventeen ranches, two of which were across the river, with 6,500 horses and mules, 2,600 cattle and 72,000 sheep. The prosperity of the settlement spoke well for the leadership of Captain Blas María de la Garza Falcón, whom Escandón considered one of his most able colonizers.

The prosperity of the settlers was reflected in their buildings. The inspectors noted two houses built of stone and the rest of the settlers were living in attractive adobe structures. These were arranged in an orderly fashion around the plaza.

The town's mission of San Agustín de Laredo under the supervision of Fray Juan Bautista García was located on the east bank of the San Juan River. Here were gathered two hundred forty-three Indians from five tribes, two-thirds of whom had been baptized. The padre's house was constructed of stone and mortar while the Indians lived in simple but substantial adobe huts. At the time of the visit, the Indians were engaged in building a new mission church, replacing the small church that no longer was adequate for their needs.

The third Rio Grande settlement visited was Mier, consisting of thirty-nine families, an increase of ten families since its founding in 1753. Again ranching on both sides of the river was the main occupation. Captain José Florencio de Chapa informed his royal visitors that his settlers had never received government aid but supported themselves by means of ranching and the trading of wool, hides and salt. The trade enabled them to purchase maize and other necessities. The colonizers had five ranches which pastured 4,000 horses and cattle and 40,000 sheep. Most of the stock was grazed on the Mexican side of the river but also much grazing land was utilized across the river.

The villa had no mission, but there were approximately one hundred fifty Indians living on the outskirts of the settlement. The settlers were dependent on the padre from Camargo for their spiritual needs.

The commissioners moved up the river to visit Revilla, today Nuevo Guerrero. The population was given as three hundred fifty-seven Spanish, mestizo and mulatto settlers under the charge of Captain José Báez Benavides. Like the other Rio Grande towns, ranching was the main enterprise although some farming had been attempted. This showed only limited success since the river was too low for irrigation purposes. The ranching enterprise consisted of twenty-nine ranches, which had more than 50,000 cattle, horses, mules and sheep. Ranching was supplemented by a profitable salt trade.

Revilla had no mission. Fray Miguel de Santa María ministered to the settlers and also worked among the bands of Indians living near the settlement on both banks of the river. The work among the Indians showed few positive results, but the Indians did not molest the settlers.

From Revilla the Cuervo party crossed the river to visit Dolores on July 20. The settlement consisted of a single ranch under the control of Captain José Vásquez Borrego. The captain had twenty-three families working on the ranch. The livestock consisted of four hundred horses, 1,600 mules, 3,000 mares and 3,000 cattle. The location was ill suited for agriculture. The food supply for the ranch came from the captain's Coahuilan ranch. Eleven ranch hands served as a mounted police force to protect the settlers.

The settlement had no mission and was dependent on the periodic visits of the padre from Revilla. Cuervo noted only two Indians living on the ranch who claimed to be Christians. The commissioners commented that they were Christian in name only.

The final Rio Grande town inspected was that of Laredo. The visit was brief since the settlement

offered little evidence of progress in its two years of existence. The eighty-five inhabitants were under the command of Tomás Sánchez, the founder of the town. The chief source of wealth was ranching which consisted of seven hundred twelve horses, two hundred twenty-five mules, over 9,000 sheep and one hundred eleven head of cattle. The area was not well suited for irrigation. Attempts at planting corn were made but the droughts were too severe for successful agriculture. The true value of the settlement was the fact that it was a good crossing point on the river for the road from Nuevo León and Coahuila to Texas. An additional advantage was that the villa did not cost the royal treasury anything since Captain Sánchez financed the undertaking.

There were Apaches living about twenty leagues from Laredo, but they did not appear to present a threat to the settlement. Since there was no missionary, the settlers were dependent on the priest from Revilla.

Laredo was the northernmost point for the official visitation. Cuervo decided not to visit La Bahía del Espíritu on the northern boundary of Nuevo Santander, since he considered it more closely tied to the Texas province than Nuevo Santander.

On the return trip the Cuervo commission visited Burgos, a little to the northeast of San Fernando. Here they found two hundred sixty persons and nine soldiers, who were making valiant efforts in defending the community from frequent Indian attacks. The settlers owned 9,000 head of stock and grew beans, maize and vegetables but farming was hampered by floods. Because of flooding, Cuervo recommended a change of site for the town.

Due to the hostility of the Indians in the vicinity, no mission had been built. At the time of the visit, the settlement had no missionary since Fray Simón del Hierro had recently been recalled to Mexico City.

From Burgos the royal inspectors journeyed to Jaumave. The settlement had eighty-eight families who did ranching and farming. The livestock report indicated 70,000 head of cattle, horses and sheep.

Padre Juan Llanos ministered to the settlers and the forty-five Pisones gathered in the mission of San Juan Bautista. The commissioners were impressed with the Spanish speaking ability of the Indians.

Santa Bárbara, today Ocampo, was the next point for inspection. The inhabitants totaled nearly five hundred, ranking it among the more populated towns in the province. It was under the trusted command of Captain Bernerena. The district proved agriculturally productive. There also was some stock raising, consisting of some two to 3,000 head.

Santa Bárbara's mission of Soledad de Ygollo was under the capable direction of Fray Francisco Escandón, the brother of the governor. His successful work was evidenced by the number of conversions and Spanish speaking Indians, including some Janambre, who were the traditional enemies of the settlers in the southwestern region of the province.

From Santa Bárbara the inspection party retraced its steps northward to the town of Palmillas under the command of Francisco Gaona. It was located in a fertile valley well suited for farming. Stock raising, which was supplementary, included some 3,000 head of animals.

Fray Juan de Dios Ponce de León ministered to the settlers and about one hundred Indians. The latter were all converted and enjoyed a considerable amount of self-government.

The final visitation took place at Real de los Infantes, today Bustamante, on August 18. The settlement was a mining camp of two hundred persons. The industry did not prove profitable due to lack of mining technology.

The spiritual needs of the miners and seven Indian families were taken care of by Fray Domingo Guillén. There was no mission for the Indians.

With the completion of the inspection of the villas of Nuevo Santander José Tienda de Cuervo and Agustín López de la Cámara Alta on October 13, 1757, returned to Mexico City to render an official report of their findings to Viceroy Agustín de Ahumada y Villalón. The conclusion of their report showed that 8,993 colonists had been settled in twenty-four villas. The inspectors reported an extensive cattle industry, totaling some 58,000 horses, 25,000 cattle, 1,874 burros and 288,000 sheep and goats. The largest sheep and goat ranches were on the Rio Grande at Camargo, Revilla and Mier. This, the commissioners stated, was the principal source of wealth in the province. Agriculture the inspectors found to be a supplementary source of wealth but it was substantial in the production of beans, maize and vegetables. Added to livestock and agricultural production was the increasing importance of trade in salt, fish, beef, veal, mutton, hides and tallow.

In summarizing the spiritual development of the province, the commissioners reported twenty-two Franciscan missionaries. These ministered to some 1,400 Spanish families and several hundred Indians.

The official inspectors had a number of suggestions for better government of the province and increased economic productivity. Their recommendations included elimination of three captain positions and the reduction of all captain salaries. Similarly they advised decreasing the military forces by forty percent and concentrating the remaining forces in the southern and western portions of the province where there was the greatest need for their services.

Livestock and agricultural productivity could be increased if the settlers were given individual land allotments. This they thought would provide a greater incentive to produce than the system of common land holdings. The division of common lands, according to the report, was becoming more imperative because of the increasing number of settlers. It also was in keeping with Escandón's original promise to his colonizers.

The official inspectors left no doubt about the success of the colonization venture. Escandón had succeeded in colonizing an area that earlier Spaniards had failed to do for two centuries. As the official report indicated, the gap between Tampico and Matagorda Bay on the Texas coast had been closed. The most pressing need to be resolved was the common land question and the planting of a few more settlements in the interior districts of the province.

GENERAL VISIT OF THE ROYAL COMMISSION OF 1767

The interval between the Cuervo inspection of 1757 and the General Visit of the Royal Commission of 1767 found José de Escandón preoccupied with the daily routine of administering his province and implementing some of the recommendations made in the Cuervo report.

In the provincial capital of Santander the governor initiated the construction of a dam for flood control and a church. The total cost was 15,000 pesos which the Spanish government paid to the governor in 1759. Road construction also occupied the governor's attention. In 1760 he ordered the building of a road from San Luis, today Tampico, to Monterrey.

With an eye on history, the governor in 1760 commissioned Fray Vicente de Santa María to write a history of the Nuevo Santander province. Historians are forever indebted to the governor and the padre for the historical account since it has become one of the major sources for the study of the Indian and colonial past of the state of Tamaulipas. In addition the friar's account has proved invaluable to scholars as a source for the study of geography, mineral resources, plant and animal life of the area. His account of Indian life covers such topics as the number of tribes, customs, religious beliefs and rites and languages. It was a two volume work, but unfortunately the second volume has never been recovered. The first treats the Seno Mexicano until the arrival of Escandón in the 1740's.

The year 1762 was a sad one for the governor. On March 14 his beloved wife, Josefa de Llera y Bayas, died. From this marriage there were born seven children: María Ignacia (died in early childhood), Manuel Ignacio, Ignacio Vicente, Mariano Timoteo, Francisco Antonio, Josefa María and María Josefa.

The opening of the decade of the 1760's witnessed important viceregal changes in Mexico City. With the death of Viceroy Agustín de Ahumada y Villalón on February 5, 1760, the audiencia temporarily took over viceregal duties until the following April 28. The interim administration was followed by the brief rule of Viceroy Francisco Cagigal de la Vega until the following October 5 when Joaquín de Monserrat, Marquis of Cruillas, was appointed viceroy. It was under the Marquis of Cruillas that the implementation of the Cuervo recommendations was carried out.

After Cuervo submitted his report to the viceroy in October of 1757, it was forwarded to the crown for final approval. The Spanish governmental bureaucracy was not noted for quick action. The royal response of March 29, 1763, ordered that certain reforms be made and the partition of common lands be initiated.

Before the royal decree of 1763, Escandón had already initiated changes, which he himself had recommended in his own report of 1755 and which were also reiterated in the Cuervo report two years later. Among the changes initiated before 1763 were the relocations of certain towns which suffered periodic inundations. The governor informed the viceroy in 1764 that the change of sites for Burgos and Escandón had already been completed. Still to be relocated was Reynosa.

In respect to founding three new villas, as advised by Cuervo, the governor requested the viceroy to extend financial assistance to the families desiring to settle the new villas. He added that these also be supplied with arms to defend themselves against the Indians. The suggested locations were as follows: the first was to be placed at the mouth of the Arroyo del Baratillo, which was a little to the southeast of Real de Borbón; a second villa was to be located on the road between Burgos and Santander; and the third some eight leagues to the southwest of Padilla. All three were strategic locations to contain the Indian threats.

Implementation of the royal instructions began on May 9, 1765, with the founding of Cruillas, named in honor of the then governing viceroy. The location was at the place called Los Encinos, the intermediate point between Santander and Burgos. At the time of Escandón's death in 1770 the villa's population numbered seventy-seven families or three hundred ninety persons. The nearby mission of Monserrat was under the charge of Padre Joseph Lira.

The following year in June the establishment of the

second town took place. It was named San Carlos in honor of the then reigning Spanish monarch, Charles III. The settlement was a mining camp, located east of Real de Borbón. Four years later the population stood at fifty families or one hundred thirty-five persons. At first the Indians resided in the villa but in 1770 a nearby mission of Boca del Puerto de Loreto was built.

The founding of the third villa was delayed until June 3, 1770. It was called Croix in honor of the new viceroy, Carlos Francisco de Croix and located southwest of Padilla.

During the 1760's charges of maladministration were leveled against the governor by some settlers who accused him of reaping excessive profits and exploiting his subjects. To these accusations were added the complaints of some of the missionaries who were dissatisfied with the rate of progress in Christianizing the Indians.

One such complaint was raised in 1766 by Fray José Joaquín García del Santísimo Rosario from the Colegio Apostólico de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe in Zacatecas, a seminary which trained many of the Franciscans for the missions in the Seno Mexicano. The padre complained about the state of decay of the missions in the provinces, some of which were being abandoned by the Indians. This decay he blamed on the governor for his failure to provide promised financial and military aid. In a number of cases the missionaries left the missions and moved to nearby Spanish settlements. With reason the missionary found this to be a violation of the purpose of his religious order whose primary purpose was to work among the heathen Indians and not to minister to the Christian Spaniards or already converted Indians. The latter spiritual task was the duty of the diocesan clergy.

The missionary, as well as some of his other Franciscan colleagues, complained that Escandón frequently exaggerated the fertility prospects of the sites selected for his villas and missions. A more damaging accusation against the work of the governor was the charge that he antagonized the native population by taking away their better lands and giving it to Spanish settlers. Furthermore the missionaries cited the bad living habits of the Spanish inhabitants as one of the major obstacles to the conversion of the Indians.

Some of the criticisms by the settlers may have stemmed from feelings of jealousy of the successful work of the governor. At the same time a few missionaries must have felt the stinging comments of the governor, who accused some of them of seeking the more comfortable life in the villas rather than undergoing the hard mission life. That the governor had made profits in the colonization project cannot be denied. This point will again be raised in the closing days of his life at which time the crown ordered an investigation. Neither can one dismiss the missionary charges as idle complaints. These grievances were coming from men who had worked in the Nuevo Santander missions and were voicing their misgivings from firsthand experiences. [10] In 1766 these accusations appear to have reached some sympathetic ears of government officials in Mexico City and were probably partially responsible for the governor's recall to the viceregal capital by the viceroy. However the main reason for the recall was the need to discuss with Escandón the implementation of the partition of common lands.

At the time of the recall, the new viceroy, Carlos Francisco de Croix, had arrived in Mexico City on August 24, 1766. Escandón's insistence on the immediate implementation of the division of common land holdings was supported by other officials in the viceregal government. The viceroy responded with the creation of a royal commission in 1767 to carry out the division of lands. To head the commission, the viceroy selected Juan Fernando de Palacio, who also was designated as interim governor of the province while charges of maladministration were pending against Escandón. The royal commissioner was accompanied by José de Osorio y Llamas, advocate of the royal councils, together with other minor officials.

According to the viceregal instructions the mission of the visit to the province was to appoint surveyors to review the common land holdings and survey municipal jurisdictions, to prepare necessary arrangements for granting land to individual colonists and to see to it that all transactions are duly recorded in order that all settlers and the missions will have clear title to their possessions. In addition the royal commissioners were charged with the responsibility to investigate the accusation of bad government made against Escandón.

The Spaniard was very much bound by legal traditions. In carrying out the distribution of land, the general visit of 1767 was no exception to this rule. The colorful and traditional ceremony accompanying the granting of land titles to settlers started on May 15 in Laredo and was repeated as the official body made its way down the river to visit the Rio Grande villas and from there south into the present state of Tamaulipas.

The official ceremony started with a Mass after which the commissioners explained to the assembled

10 For a detailed study of the conflict between Escandón and the Franciscan missionaries the reader is urged to consult Fidel de Lajarza, *Conquista Espiritual del Nuevo Santander* (Madrid, Spain: Instituto Santo Toribio de Mogrovejo, 1947).

settlers the purpose of their visitation. The explanation stressed the legal technicalities involved in making land surveys and in holding judicial proceedings in cases of land grant disputes. After this the settlers were requested to select two appraisers and two surveyors from their own group. At the same time, the royal officials named two of their men to represent the crown's interest. The settlers usually selected their surveyors and appraisers from the older settlers since these were more familiar with the lands of the villa. The town officials were then instructed by the commissioners in the details of placing grantees in actual possession. In case there should be any dispute about land grants, the settler retained the right to appeal his case to higher courts.

The town and commission officials also had the responsibility of offering recommendations regarding the land that could be irrigated and land that was suitable only for pasturage. In addition to this responsibility, the officials designated common lands for the town, known as ejidos.

The procedure for carrying out the survey started with marking off six leagues around each town in four directions. This area constituted the jurisdiction of the town and roughly corresponded to the English system of county government. Within this town jurisdiction, each settler would then be given a grant of land. The grants were made on the basis of merit and seniority. Merit was defined as civilian and military service to the crown and special services performed for the local community. Seniority meant the number of years each settler or his family lived in the villa. The seniority criteria consisted of three categories: (1) primitive settlers, whose residence in the town exceeded six years, (2) old settlers, who had resided in the community for a period of six years and not less than two, and (3) recent settlers who had immigrated within the last two years. The primitive settlers, their sons and heirs were granted two leagues (8,856 acres) of pasture land and twelve *caballerías* (1,500 acres) for planting. The special consideration for the primitive settlers was their reward for being among the first pioneers to brave the frontier. The second category received two leagues of pasture land but only six *caballerías* for farming. The recent immigrant obtained only two leagues of grazing land. Because of the criteria of military and civilian service, the captain of the villa received the largest land grant, which was twice as much as was granted to a primitive settler. In making the grants the officials made every effort not to deprive a settler of improvements he may have made on the common lands. In cases where a settler had made improvements on the common pasture and farm lands, he had to be compensated for these improvements whenever the individual land grant boundaries did not include his improvements.

In the larger towns, such as Camargo, the above criteria could present problems because of the large number of requests for grants. This was not the case in Laredo where there were more grants available than settlers. In fact, in the latter settlement, a considerable number of grants remained unassigned. In the larger settlements, the third category of settlers were at a disadvantage. In these cases conflicting land requests were resolved by having the recent arrivals draw lots. If this did not resolve the conflict, the settler could always take his case to court.

The surveyors not only laid out the land grants but they also planned the laying out of towns. It was their first function to select a site for the town plaza. Two streets, each ten varas in width, at each corner of the plaza were marked. Around the plaza the surveyors chose sites for the church, municipal building, jail and plots for the residence of the captain and other important citizens. The plots were granted on the condition that the persons would construct a house within two years. If not, they could suffer the penalty of the loss of the lot.

In laying out a town, common lands known as ejidos were set aside. These can best be described as common pasture and planting lands for the town settlers. They could be rented by the townspeople to graze their livestock or to do farming. The revenue from the rent was given to the municipal government to be used for charity. Since the ejidos were at the edge of the townsite, the farmer could go to and fro each day to tend to his livestock and do some farming. Frequently the *porción* holdings were more distant and required the absence of several days to travel to these properties.

The commissioners instructed the settlers in the setting up of town government. The town inhabitants were expected to elect a procurator general, a judge and two deputy councilmen annually.

In making land grants the surveyors had to take into consideration the potential of irrigation. Land had little value if there was no water. Escandón had frequently admonished the Rio Grande settlers to develop irrigation. The older settlers found the advice impractical. Frequently the river was too low to drain water into the irrigation ditches. At other times the river flooded and destroyed the irrigation levees. On top of these problems the settlers found that the soil absorbed the water very quickly and thus water could not be drained a great distance. The solution to the problem was to make land grants in a *porción*, which was a prolonged quadrangle with one end bordering on the river. The river front of the *porción* measured about nine-thirteenth's of a mile and the length of the grant extended from eleven to sixteen miles away from the river. This became the standard measure for the *porciones* along the river. After *porciones* were surveyed, each one was given a number and assigned

to the appropriate municipal jurisdiction. The number of *porciones* assigned to each municipal district was as follows: Laredo, eighty-eight, of which twenty were unassigned; Revilla, sixty-eight *porciones* which fronted the Salado River and the Rio Grande; Camargo, one hundred eleven which fronted the San Juan River and the Rio Grande and there were seven inland *porciones* without water on the north side of the Rio Grande; Mier, eighty *porciones* on the Alamo River and Reynosa, eighty *porciones* on the Rio Grande. [11]

The delivery of a land grant followed a prescribed ritual. One such recorded ritual is the granting of a *porción* on the boundary line between Camargo and Reynosa, which reads as follows :

> On the first day of July of the said year [1767], I, the said Judge Commissioner, being on the boundary that is called Cucharas, which is that which divides the jurisdiction of the said town of Camargo and Reynosa, in company with the attorneys, Bartolomé de Treviño and Don Ygnacio Saldaña the surveyors and other inhabitants; and the concurrence of the captain justice of Reynosa; from the said boundary of Cucharas we followed the *porción* marked out and adjucated to Don Gregorio Farías according as expressed in the said Testimony of the Visit as Number One, and following the west course up the margin of the Rio Grande we arrived at the second demarcation in front, where I took the said Farías by the hand, and having staked out the *porción*, in the name of His Majesty (Whom God Guard) I passed him to the four winds: he tore up herbs, threw stones and performed other demonstrations and ceremonies of true possession, doing the same at the opposite headline, which runs to the south course, and for which grant he gave thanks to our Catholic King and Lord, and I ordered him to place perpetual corner stones on both headlines, the attorneys signing this proceeding with me and those of my assistance with whom I act, in default of a Notary Public there being no such office in the terms fixed by law, to which I certify. (signatures) José Antonio de la Garza Falcón, Don José Ynojosa, Bartholomé de Treviño, Ygnacio Saldaña, of assistance, Miguel de Barcena.13

After the ceremony the officials, witnesses and the grantee signed the official documents, which were deposited in the archives of the town, the province and Mexico City.

In receiving the *porción* the settler assumed a number of responsibilities. He agreed to take possession of his property within two months after allocation and start stock raising. The grant carried with it the promise that the settler would not sell the property to any undesirable person. Finally the settler accepted the responsibility of military duties in defense of the settlement. If the grantee failed to fulfill these conditions, the *porción* would revert to the crown.

With the exception of the inhabitants at Dolores and Laredo, the settlers in the other Rio Grande villas lived on the south side of the river. However, some of their *porciones* were on the north side of the river and for these holdings the ranchers hired ranch hands to watch over their cattle when they could not be present on the ranches. One group of ranch holdings north of the river was known as the El Sauz settlement, located in the northern part of the present day Starr County. There was no river front for these ranches and the ranchers were dependent on water wells, some of which have continued in use down to the present. Among the Camargo settlers receiving *porciones* north of the river were Pedro Ygnacio de Saldaña, José Francisco de la Garza, Juana Josefa Gutiérrez, Agustín de la Garza, Xpal García, José Antonio de la Garza, Diego García, Juan José de la Garza Falcón, José Salvador de la Garza, Margarita Gonzáles, Joaquín de la Garza Falcón, José de Ynojosa, Miguel Pérez, Juan José Solis, Francisco Antonio Villarreal, José Salvador García, Santiago de la Garza and José Antonio Guajardo. These ranchers and settlers from the other Rio Grande villas are the true pioneers in developing the ranching industry in the south Texas triangle.

In addition to the *porciones*, the surveyors marked out lands for the missions. The general visit in 1767 merely confirmed the mission land grants made earlier by the governor of Nuevo Santander. This did not hold true for the settlements from Mier to Laredo since these had no missions. Mier was assigned mission land by the royal commissioners of 1767.

The missionary was held responsible for assigning land to be used by the individual Indians and seeing that it was properly cultivated. In addition to the lands assigned to the Indians, extra lands were assigned to the missionary. The proceeds from these lands were placed in the community cash box. The extra income could then be utilized in certain stipulated cases to provide for needs of the mission.

The supervision of mission lands was only one more duty charged to the mission priest. As noted earlier, the missionary's primary function was to settle and Christianize the Indians. Added to these time consuming duties was the charge of keeping records. The record keeping included such data as births, marriages and deaths. For instance, in regard to mortality statistics the missionary was expected to list the cause of death. Marriage records were extremely important for the tracing of family geneologies. For these painstaking tasks the historian owes an eternal debt of gratitude to the missionaries.

The general visit of 1767 on the Rio Grande was concluded with the surveying of *porciones* for the

11 For a complete list of the villa families who were granted *porciones* see Scott, pp. 74-76, 79-83, 90-93 and 95-97.

12 Cited in Scott, p. 87

settlers of Reynosa in the latter part of August. By January 20, 1768, the royal commission arrived in Santander. Here the story of the general visit to the Rio Grande settlements was repeated. After completing their duties in the central districts of the province, the commissioners carried out their duties in the southern regions of Nuevo Santander during the summer of 1768.

By fall of the same year the royal officials had completed the general visit and returned to Mexico City to render an account of their activities to the viceroy. The conclusion of the commissioners left no doubt that they found the charges of maladministration against Escandón unfounded. If the report carried any criticism of the governor, it was the failure to found a third settlement as recommended in the Cuervo report of 1757. The failure to do so, as noted earlier, was not due to negligence on Escandón's part but rather to the fact that in 1766 he had returned to Mexico City to defend himself against the charges of his critics.

The general visit of 1767 carried a long-range legacy for the Rio Grande settlements. First of all it was the start of the *porcion* grants. After this visit more *porciones* were granted to new settlers. Many of these were made north of the river where ranching proved promising. The arrival of the new ranchers helped in containing the Indians who refused to become settled. A second result of the general visit was the greater dispersal of settlers who lived on their land grants rather than living in the central settlement as was the case with the older settlers. To counteract the isolated life on the ranches, two grantees frequently built their homes next to each other. Finally individual land grants tended to stimulate the growth of settlements more so than the previous practice of common land holdings.

The land grants between 1767 and 1810 tended to be larger than the ones granted during the general visit. Grants made during this period (1767-1810) on the north side of the Rio Grande began a little west of present day Weslaco and included Mercedes, Edcouch, San Benito, Olmito, Brownsville, Raymondville, Lyford and Port Isabel. During the same period, grants were made north of San Román in Starr County.

In cases where the grantees did not meet the terms of the grant, the grants reverted to the crown to be distributed among other settlers. This happened with a number of grants around Revilla and north of the river in Zapata County.

Up until 1777 much of the land between Reynosa and the Gulf remained undistributed. As the Indian menace subsided in the area, Reynosa settlers pushed their grazing lands into the area without legal claim to the land. After 1777 grants were made and many of these ended up in the hands of well-to-do Reynosa and Camargo settlers.

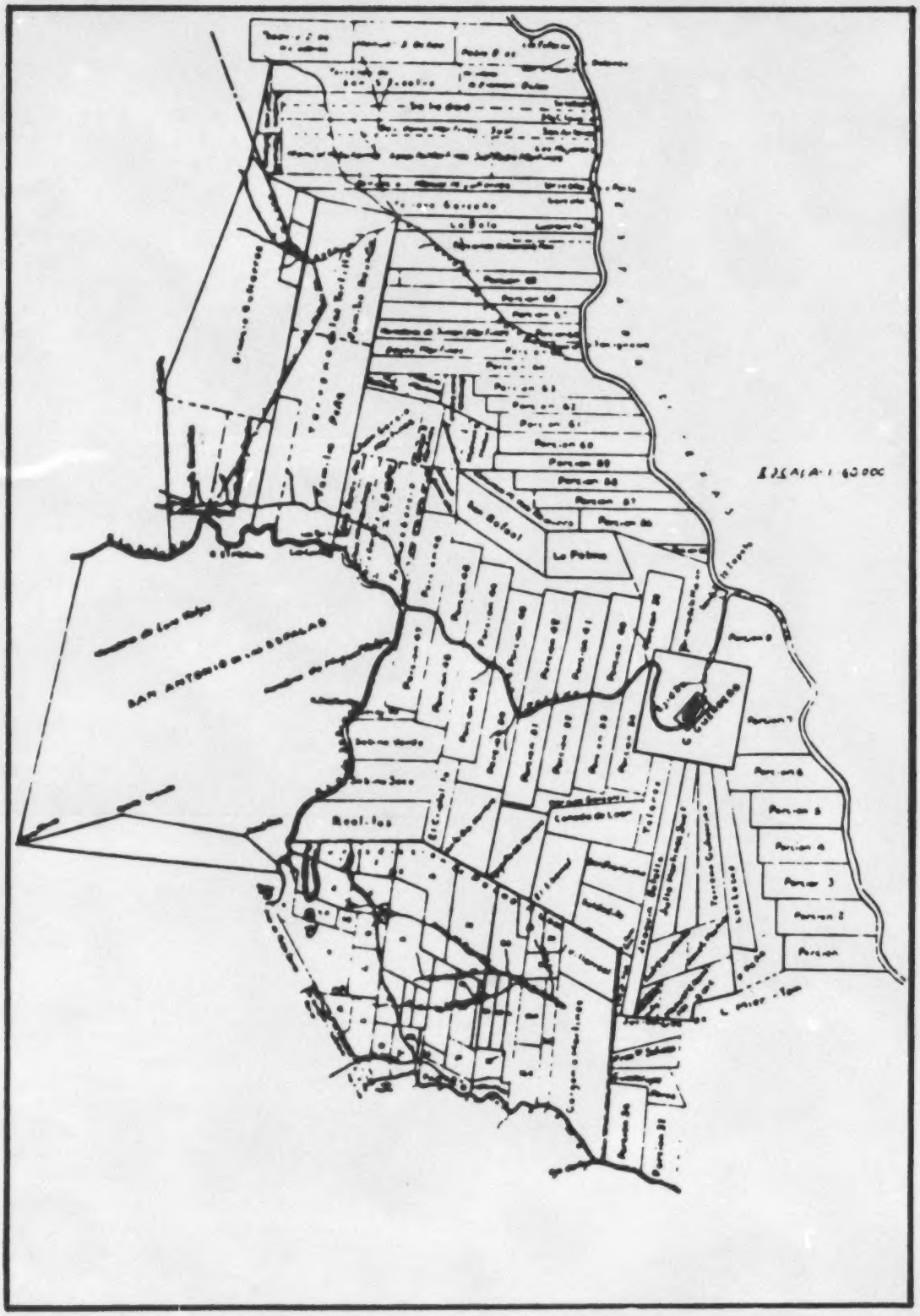
The most extensive land grants beyond Reynosa to the Gulf were given to the heirs of Escandón. It is estimated that the grants consisted of some 2,850,000 acres. The generous grants indicate the crown's willingness to reward the Escandón family for the service rendered by the colonizer of Nuevo Santander.

The division of lands made by the general visit of 1767 and subsequent grants show that settlements in Nuevo Santander were well established. No longer was it necessary to retain common land grants whereby settlers would remain settled in concentrated sites and thus better protect themselves from Indian attacks. Indian attacks did not end with the colonization of the Seno Mexicano. Escandón's colonization work did place the settler in a better position to cope with this menace. In this sense the general visit of 1767 reaffirmed what Cuervo had concluded in 1757; namely, the Escandón colonization project was a success.

END OF THE ESCANDON GOVERNORSHIP

At the time of the beginning of the general visit in 1767 Escandón was approaching the age of sixty-seven. Much of his life had been spent on the frontier and undoubtedly the rigors of such a life began to tell on his health. Old age was only one reason for not being able to devote himself to the duties of governing his province during the closing years of his life from 1767 to 1770. The old charges of maladministration were revived and the need to defend himself against the accusations forced him to live in Mexico City rather than in his provincial capital of Santander. The duties of governing the province were first fulfilled by the interim governor, José Rubio, who took over from Juan Fernando de Palacio on January 20, 1768, who had served as interim-governor during the general visit from 1767 to 1768. Rubio's interim-governorship terminated on September 18, 1769, at which time he was replaced by Vicente González Santianes. The latter continued as interim-governor until the death of Escandón in the following year.

The complaints against Escandón's conduct as governor culminated in the filing of a suit against him in 1767. Diego Cornido, the plaintiff, claimed that Escandón led everyone to believe that he had underwritten the military expenses in the colonization of the province whereas in reality he had received 40,000 pesos each year from the royal treasury to use for military expenditures. The suit further charged that Escandón had accumulated large ranching properties and built himself a magnificent palace in the city of Santander. According to Cornido the accumulation of these vast holdings was done through defrauding the people in the province.



MAP OF THE JURISDICTION OF GUERRERO, TAMAULIPAS, 1933, SHOWING THE PORCIONES

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

The governor defended himself with a report on all of his activities as administrator of the province. He listed the names of officers with whom he did business and stated that these officials can testify to his good conduct. He pointed out that the Spanish government's policy did not prohibit the realization of profits from colonization ventures. In fact, colonizers were expected to reap profits since they were paid no salaries. The Spanish government paid wages only to soldiers and priests. The governor did not deny that the payment of these salaries made it possible for these persons and others to purchase needed supplies from the commissaries and other business enterprises, some of which were owned by the governor. Friends of the governor saw this as a legitimate reward to the governor for sacrifices made in the colonization of the province. His defenders at the trial pointed to the fact that many persons in the provinces admired the governor, but admitted there were some who resented his wealth and success.

The trial was still in progress when Escandón died on September 10, 1770, in Mexico City. Since the court had ordered an attachment of sequestration to Escandón's estate, the inheritance rights to the holdings remained unsettled until 1773. It was in that year that the governor's son, José de Escandón de Llera, requested the court to make a final decision. The heirs showed the court that their father had made his fortune through legitimate means and that he had even paid soldiers food and money out of his own resources. The final court decision was a complete exoneration for the governor. Unfortunately the decision came three years after his death, but it was a befitting epitaph for a man who had done his job well.

CONCLUSION

A trip from Laredo to the lower Rio Grande Valley and into the Mexican state of Tamaulipas will remind the traveler of the indelible legacy left by the colonizer of the Seno Mexicano. Frequently the visitor will be traversing the very routes that Escandón first laid out in his colonization project. The itinerary will pass through lands first granted by the colonizer to his settlers. Much of this land is still being used for ranching. Similarly some of the agricultural industries had their humble beginnings with the settlements initiated in the middle of the eighteenth century. Obviously later settlers including Anglo Americans in south Texas contributed to the development of the present-day industries, but many times these late comers were building on the foundation laid by Escandón, his settlers and their descendants.

Should the historical legacy of Escandón's work escape the traveler, he will see as he passes into Tamaulipas other and perhaps more impressive reminders. The people of Tamaulipas have not neglected to commemorate the name of their founder. The frequency of the use of his name for public buildings provides ample testimony for the respect and admiration the man carries down to the present day. Unfortunately such widespread commemoration is not in evidence along the Rio Grande on the Texas side. It was not until 1936 that Rio Grande City saw fit to erect a centennial monument, which in part reads "In memory of the greatest colonizer of Northern Mexico, José de Escandón, who directed exploration from Tampico to the San Antonio River, laid out 23 towns, most of which still exist; founded missions, opened roads and established settlers, 1746-1755."

The Rio Grande City centennial monument serves to remind people of south Texas of another historical legacy. Because of Escandón's work, the province of Nuevo Santander included the present Mexican state of Tamaulipas and the south Texas triangle below the Nueces River. The boundary lines remained intact when Mexico adopted its federal Constitution of 1824 and created the state of Tamaulipas. When Texas separated itself from the Mexican republic in 1836 it claimed the Rio Grande rather than the Nueces River as its southern boundary line. The claim was questionable and remained a bone of contention until the Treaty of Guadalupe in 1848 when the Rio Grande became the border line between Mexico and the United States. Thus the south Texas triangle as well as other southwestern states are governed by the treaty provisions protecting the Spanish and Mexican land grants.

The Escandón boundary lines for his province of Nuevo Santander also mean that up until 1848 the history of the south Texas triangle is part of the historical legacy of Tamaulipas. Recognition of this historical reality can do much in cementing closer relations between the people of south Texas and Tamaulipas.

Finally the legacy of Escandón is still visible in the descendants of his settlers on both sides of the Rio Grande. The ancestors of these settlers who first came to found the Rio Grande villas were the true pioneers. Their legacy has enriched the life of many present-day Mexican Americans and Anglo Americans. The history of the south Texas triangle can never be completely told if the story of these pioneers continues to be neglected. Let us hope that the commemorative monument in Rio Grande City is only the beginning in recognizing the work of Escandón and his pioneers.

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